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### Where Land and Water Meet

Mark N. Rhoades

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# WHERE LAND AND WATER MEET

MARK N. RHOADES  
FALL 1991  
THESIS PREPERATION  
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"... the fabric of a city with all the styles represented in it records the continuity of the race... memory as a guiding principle of planning comes into play."

Spiro Kostof  
Design Quarterly  
1983



## INTRODUCTION

"...the history of the city delivers precise facts, which permit to engage an immediate and precise action, in the construction of the street, the square, the quartier."

Leon Krier

The Reconstruction of The City

American cities are in a state of decay physically as well as socially, once proud industrial giants are now floundering in the Information Age. The focus of our economy is shifting from an industrial base to that of a service based economy. Cities which flourished around industry now struggle to maintain their identity, gone is the sense of history and only a sense of memory remains. When is history taken over by memory? Peter Eisenman suggests that history is intact only to the point where program and form are severed, and at this point memory takes over. The city is an ensemble of cultural as well as architectural history and memory. With the decline of the factories and the redefinition of urban fabric; history is lost and memory remains. The identity of the American city has to be reshaped.

The reasons for the decline of American cities are many: the automobile, zoning, and technology all have contributed to the decline. Through history, American cities have been treated essentially as a two dimensional plan, which can be sliced and changed at the will of the politician. The urban fabric has been destroyed. The city has been altered in the name of progress without regard for what the city truly is. The importance of the city is the collection of people who inhabit it and form the city. I see the city as an urban museum which one walks through to get a sense of the culture, history, and memory of a people.



The automobile has been and continues to be a detriment to the American city. It has allowed for the migration of people away from the urban centers, away from where they work. This transforms the city in many cases into having a daily life cycle that ends at five o'clock. The life of the city, the people are being removed from it leaving behind an empty shell. The European city developed in relationship to the people not the automobile, everything was in a relatively short walking distance. This came about due to the people gathering around the monarch for protection, but even today the automobile is seen as an intruder in the urban environment. The automobile is a large part of the American culture and allows for a freedom of movement. The automobile can be incorporated into the American city without destroying it.

The zoning laws of American cities has been a benefit to the development of the city, but has also lead to the segregation of the various functional elements which make up the city. In essence what you end up with is a business district, commercial sector, and housing in their own quadrants. Each piece functions separately as its own organism which are related by location, they never combine to form a cohesive entity. This separation is made more perverse by the introduction of the automobile. The city needs to act together with a mixing of the various functions so as to increase the life cycle of the city.

Technology as it applies to the decline of the American city has brought about the antisocialization of the American people. The computer, the fax machine are examples of technology that have allowed people to work separately away from the urban center. Information and people can be summoned at the touch of a button, no longer is there truly a need for people to gather to do business. Technology has allowed for the separation of people into their own private



worlds. The city is losing its importance as a place composed of the the historical and cultural experiences of a people, and is being transformed into merely a physical representation of a society devoid of these experiences.

The physical fabric has an importance which goes well beyond its physical presence; it serves as the physical record of the culture of a people. The lack of regard for this fabric has lead to the demolition of the fabric (for the sake of a highway or for so called new improved fabric). It is at this point where the city loses its culture, its character and struggles to survive.

The trend recently toward the treatment of urban fabric in the American city has been the monumentality of each piece; no longer does each piece fit into one cohesive entity. Each piece must stand out as a monument to an individual or a monument to business. Gone is the supporting fabric which makes these pieces special.

The waterfront has been neglected. The once strong industrial ports have lost most of their function in some cities, and only the memory of place remains. The shift in the waterfront's identity is from one of industrial, to one of public significance. How will the form of the waterfront change with this new function, and what type of program will it support? The urban fabric is unresolved at the waters edge, and issues of how the water and the land come together as well as how the city meets the water, are important. The waterfront can be used as a vehicle to recall a sense of memory of a place and translate it into built form. The focus for this thesis will be on the waterfront and how a portion of it can be developed to deal with the issues outlined above.





## **THESIS PROPOSITION**

I propose to demonstrate that through architectural intervention, the urban fabric which constitutes the waterfront, can serve to mediate between land and water, reform a sense of history, and resolve the shattered urban fabric.

## **THESIS INTENT**

The intention of this thesis is to study the waterfront typology, and how the interplay of land and water through the insertion of architectural elements, can reform a sense of place from the shattered urban fabric. The purpose of the waterfront fabric is twofold; to present a facade to the waterfront, and activate the waterfront while maintaining a relationship back to the fabric of the city.

The vehicle for this thesis will be the an urban design project, which will use several programmatic elements to explore the definition of the urban edge as it mediates between land and water. Each of these elements will promote a different condition for the exploration of the way land and water meet. Specific program functions will be highlighted in the design and will be supported by secondary urban fabric. Together these elements will constitute the urban edge and provide a sense of place and a source of civic pride for the area. The program will be made up of recreational facilities, business, and housing and will serve to refocus the city toward the waterfront. The program will also serve to activate the waterfront for a twenty-four hour life cycle not just for a certain time of day.

The insertion of these elements will reactivate the waterfront and give the city a new focus, while at the same time recalling a historic image of the cities past. The

program in conjunction with its architectural ramifications will set up a precedent for the future growth of the waterfront, as well as the city. The program will recall the memory of the past, but use the present condition as its generator. A system of filtering the urban artifacts and the remnants of urban fabric will be imposed. This will serve to clarify the the edge and allow for an intervention which will recall history and reconstitute the waterfront. The fabric of the past should be preserved to a point, destruction of the industrial fabric which constitutes the waterfront would deprive the culture of defining itself against its past.

The intention of this thesis is not to solve all the problems of a particular city. It is my view, that no one architect has the right to claim, that they can resolve the problems of a city through some utopian master plan. The city as I see it, is a collection of cultural experiences, memories, and elements from the past as well as the present. They function together as a somewhat cohesive entity. The city is built over time and is a reflection of culture. The city shouldn't be thought of as a singular element which can be designed or redesigned in one pass of the pen. It is my hope that the program used to support this thesis will act as a marker in the history of the city, and serve as a new focus for the city, in this case, Fall River Massachusetts.





## ARCHITECTURAL ISSUES

### A.) PRIMARY ISSUES:

- a.) Sequence- The way the city meets the water and how the sequence from the city is terminated at waters edge. The way the sequence from the water to the city is dealt with. The issue of promenade and how movement is induced throughout the site by architectural intervention.
- b.) Historical The creation of a place which evokes a memory of the past and restores a sense of history to the area.
- c.) Contextualism- Using an appropriate scale and working in contextual harmony with the local condition to try to link the shattered fabric together.
- d.) Solid vs Void- How the use of carved out urban spaces and object pieces can create an interplay of architectural forms along the edge which mediates between land and water. The use of public spaces to link the fabric as opposed to filling the void between the fabric.
- e.) Environmental- The way the land can be carved into or built out to create an interplay between land and water.

B.) SECONDARY ISSUES:

a.) Street facade

vs Water facade- How the urban facade reacts to street edge vs water edge.

b.) Program-

How the program can increase the daily life cycle of the waterfront by supporting different functions.

How program will act as a determinant of form.





## STATEMENT OF EXPECTATION

This thesis will be used to test my beliefs in urbanism as well as an application and interpretation of several theories of urbanism. This project will serve to refocus the center of the city and reconstitute the severed urban fabric. The realization of this thesis will take the form of several studies in plan as well as in elevation and section. These studies will form an analysis of the city, and will form a basis for the design process. The activation and creation of urban space requires more than just planning or figure ground studies. My thesis deals with an attitude toward historicism and memory and how these principles affect planning. Required will be a series of perspectives to show the nature of the space created and to suggest its use. The program shouldn't be thought of as a fixed list of elements, it may and probably will evolve throughout the design process. The program described will provide a starting point, a basis for the exploration of the thesis. The final product presented at the end of next semester might be:

- 1.) Urban Analysis
- 2.) Planning Studies (figure ground & noll map)
- 3.) Sections & Elevations
- 4.) Axon & Model
- 5.) Perspectives

These drawings and model will be the best vehicle for the exploration of the thesis, and will show the full affects of the architectural intervention as it applies to the waterfront and the city.





**SITE**

FALL RIVER, MASSACHUSETTS

City Motto-We'll Try

Founded-1803

Incorporated a City-1854

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF FALL RIVER, MASSACHUSETTS

The city of Fall River is situated on a rise of land at the head of Mount Hope Bay, an arm of Narragansett Bay. The Indians named it Quequechan or "falling-water" due to the river which ran through it and the fact that it descended over a series of waterfalls before emptying into the bay. The city was incorporated as a city in 1854.

Water has long been a driving force in the area, the Quequechan River has been the organizational piece of the cities industry as well as the city itself. The major driving force for the economy were the textile mills which were organized on the river. Fall River became a national leader in the textile industry and flourished as a city.

The textile mills brought with them many immigrants who settled in very strong ethnic communities. Each community was a self contained element which had a direct relationship to the textile mill where the people worked. There were several of these communities scattered around the city in relation to various mills. Each of these little communities had elements like a church, green area, and the basic supporting fabric. These communities combined to make up the overall fabric of the city.

The textiles mills failed for various reasons and the river lost its importance as a driving force in the areas economy yet its symbolic importance was still in tact. The city was devastated by its economic problems and several fires which destroyed much of the urban fabric. The city allowed the state of Massachusetts to place a highway through the center of the city. This was done at the expense of the Quequechan River which was piped beneath the highway. This move severed the once cohesive relationship of the cities function and its form thus the memory of what once was took

over. This move has also lead to the deformation of mainstreet. The fabric which constituted mainstreet was destroyed by the insertion of the highway and several fires, Mainstreet has lost its symbolic as well as its functional significance. The city at this point has lost its organizational basis as well as its identity.

The river can never be brought back in any significant way but the city does have another unrealized potential, the waterfront along the bay. Currently it is made up of remnants of the industrial infrastructure and doesn't resolve the edge of the city , the city seems to turn its back to it. This condition is brought about by the fact that the city hasn't evolved since the river was bottled and still is focussed on what's left of the river. Development of the waterfront will refocus the city and provide an avenue for development in the future.



## FALL RIVER A PICTORIAL HISTORY

The following images will show the state of the city past and present and will act as a supplement to the written brief on the history of the city. These images should give a sense of the cultural heritage of the city as well as the record of its built form and the evolution of the city over time.



FIG-1 FALL RIVER  
MASS. 1800.

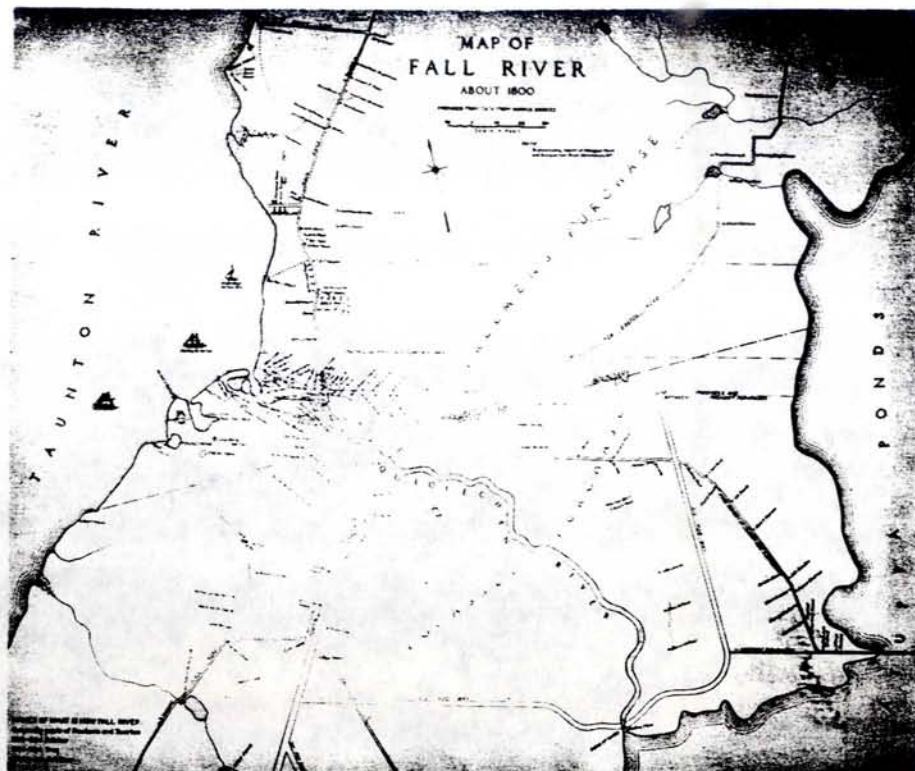
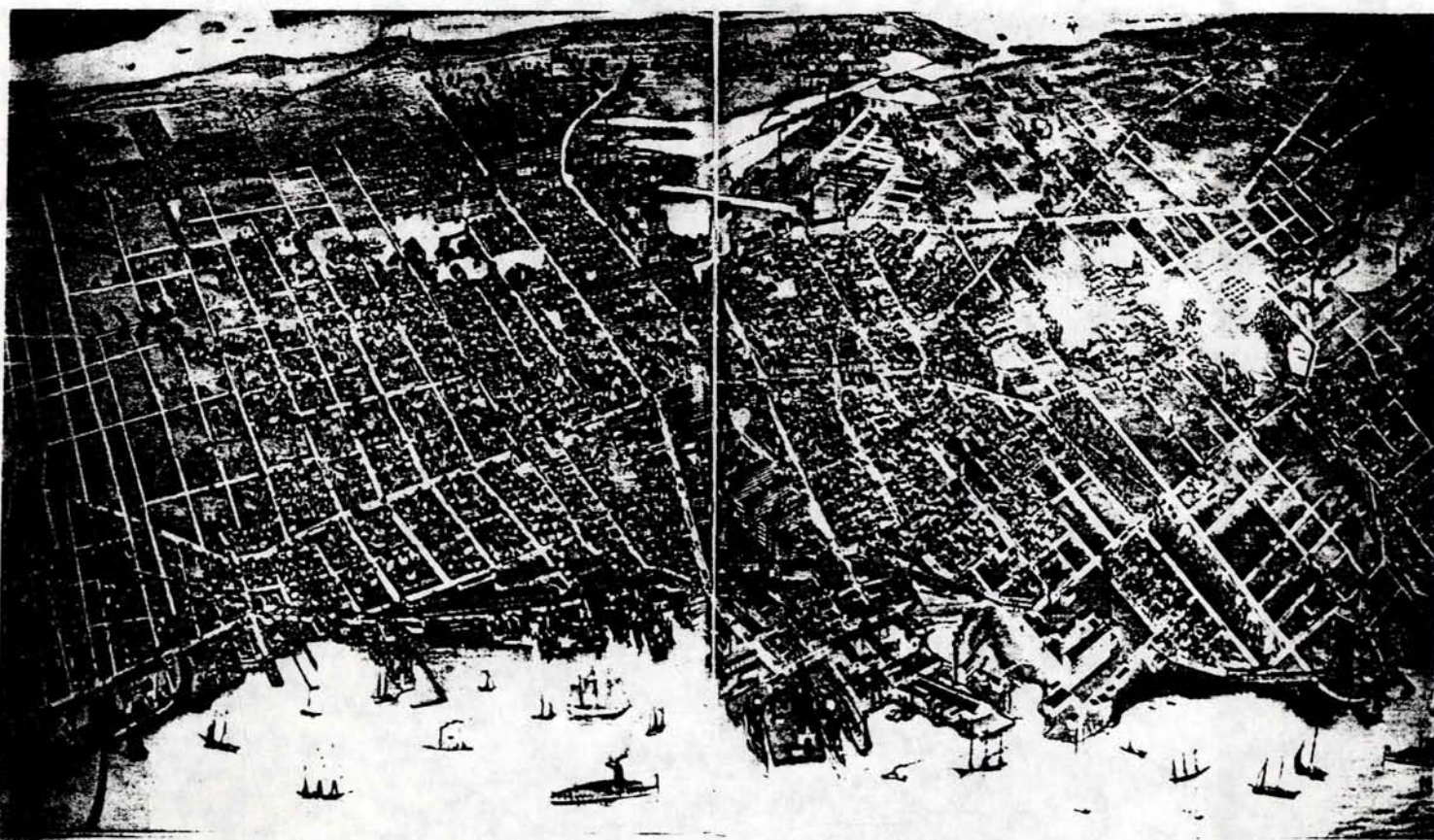


FIG-2 FALL RIVER  
MASS. 1877.



CITY OF FALL RIVER, MASS  
1877



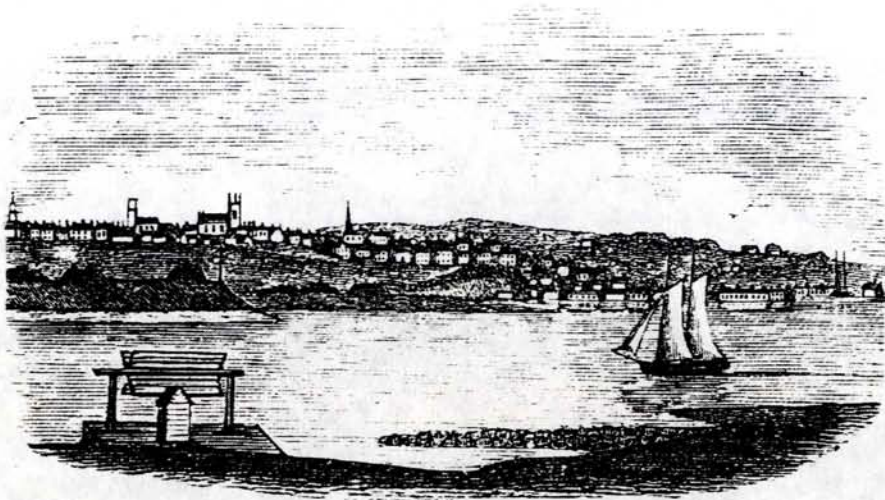


FIG-3 VIEW OF FALL  
RIVER FROM ACROSS  
THE TAUNTON RIVER.

FIG-4 VIEW OF  
MAINSTREET 1839.





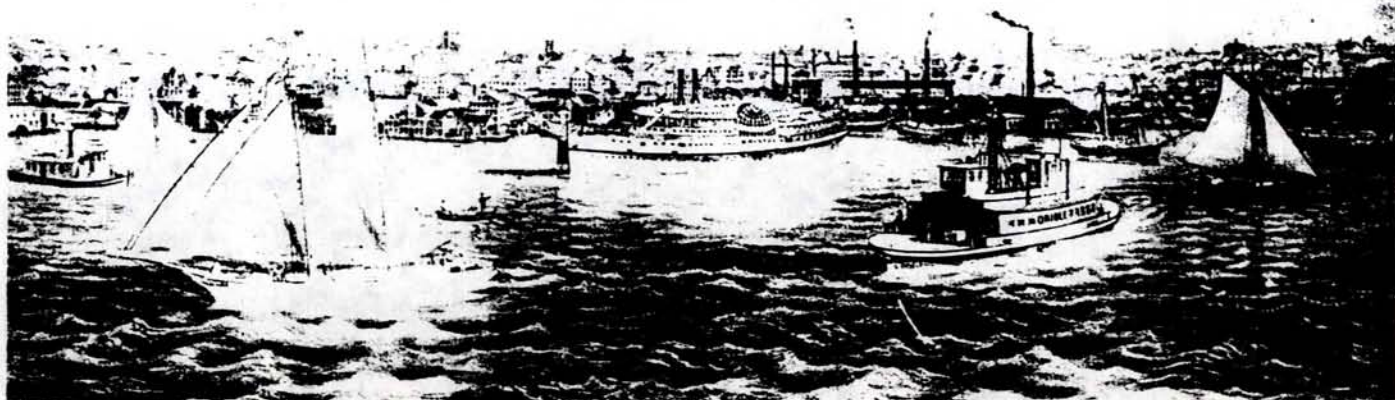


FIG-5 FALL RIVER  
WATERFRONT 1870

FIG-6 CITY PIER 1870

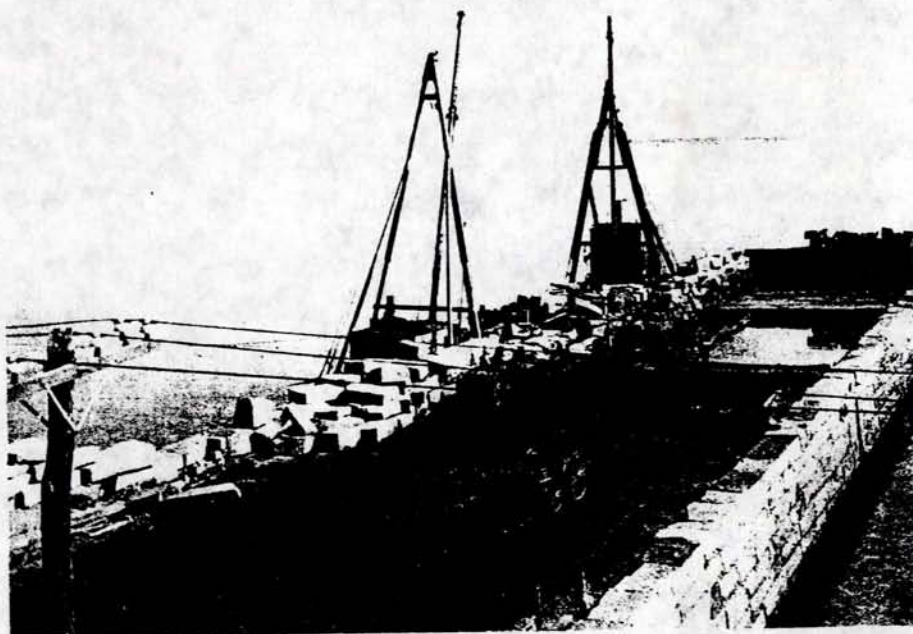


FIG-7 THE QUEQUECHAN  
RIVER AS IT PASSES  
THROUGH THE RUINS OF  
ONE OF THE TEXTILE  
MILLS AROUND 1920.

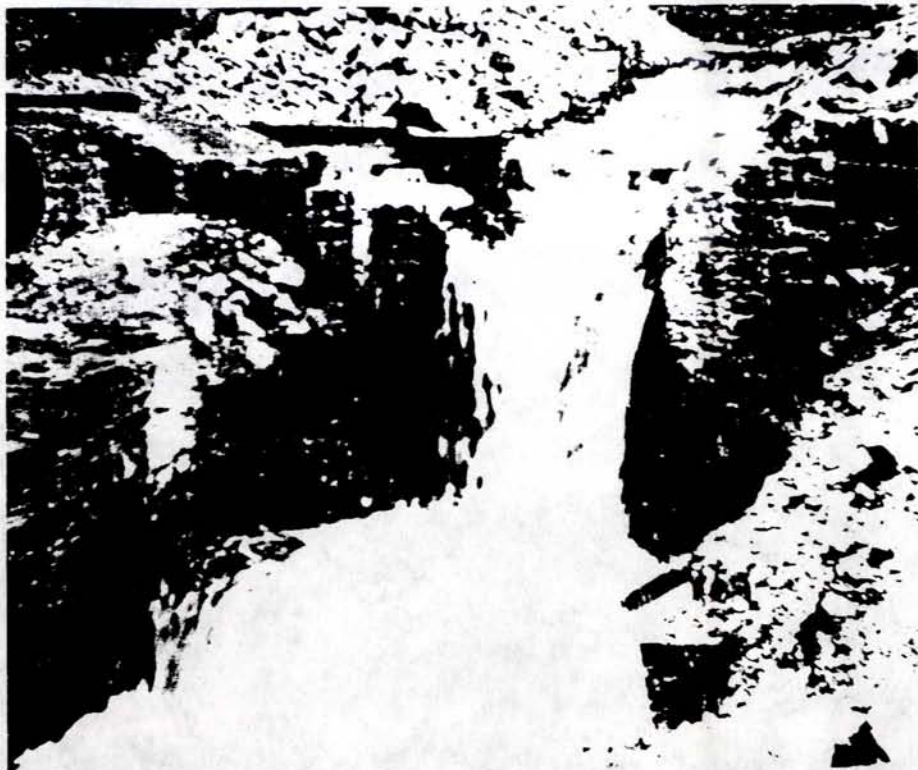


FIG-8 THE QUEQUECHAN  
RIVER DESCENDED A  
TOTAL OF 132' OVER  
NINE WATERFALLS AS  
IT MEANDERED THROUGH  
THE CITY.







FIG-9 THE FIRE OF 1928 DESTROYED MUCH OF THE FABRIC IN THE CENTER OF THE CITY.



FIG-10 FIRE OF 1916





FIG-11 GRANITE  
QUARRY IN FALL RIVER  
WHICH SUPPLIED THE  
STONE FOR THE MILLS.







FIG-12      TYPICAL  
WATERFRONT FABRIC.





FIG-13 HOUSING  
TYPOLOGY USED AROUND  
THE CITY.



FIG-14 VIEWS OF  
KENNEDY PARK. ST  
ANNE'S CHURCH IS IN  
THE BACKGROUND.

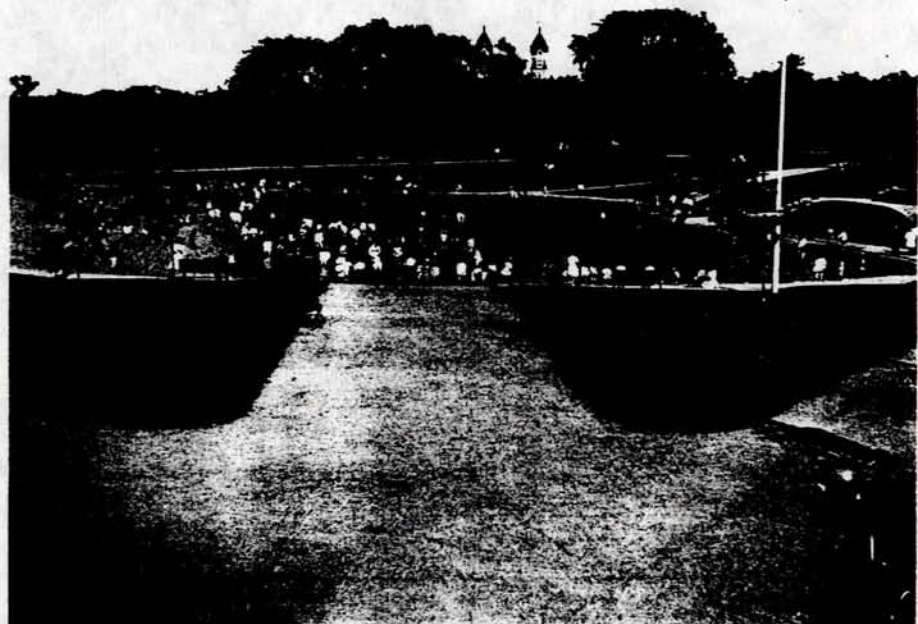






FIG-15 TYPICAL  
GRANITE COMMERCIAL  
BLOCK IN THE CITY.

FIG-16 MAINSTREET  
FALL RIVER 1870.





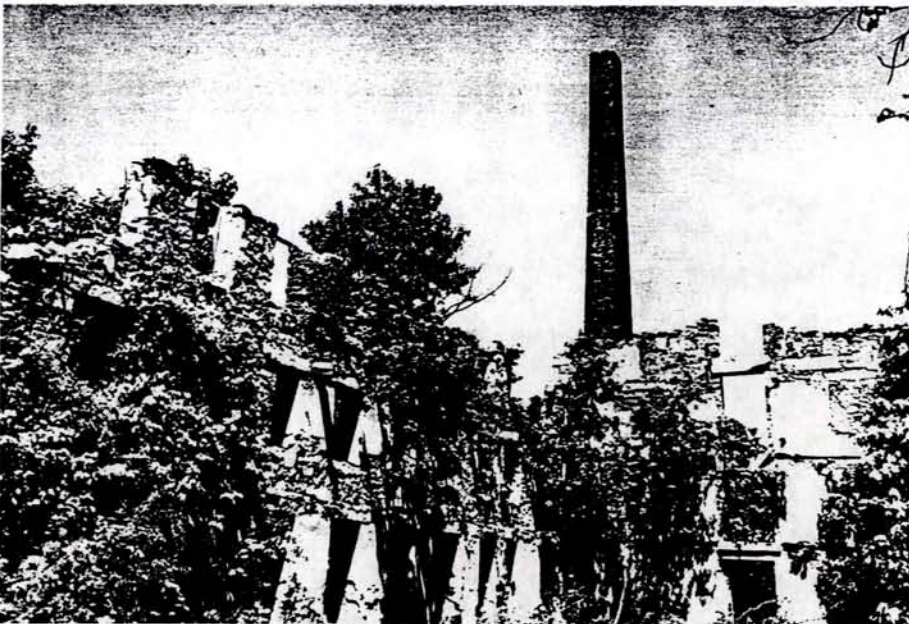


FIG-17 RUBBLE OF  
OLIVER CHASE MILL.  
THIS IMAGE  
REPRESENTS THE STATE  
OF MUCH OF THE  
INDUTRIAL FABRIC.



FIG-18 OVERVIEW OF  
THE CITY IN 1960  
AFTER THE INSERTION  
OF THE HIGHWAY.

FIG-19 OVERVIEW OF  
THE CITY PRIOR TO  
THE INSERTION OF THE  
HIGHWAY.



FIG-20 MAINSTREET  
1950.





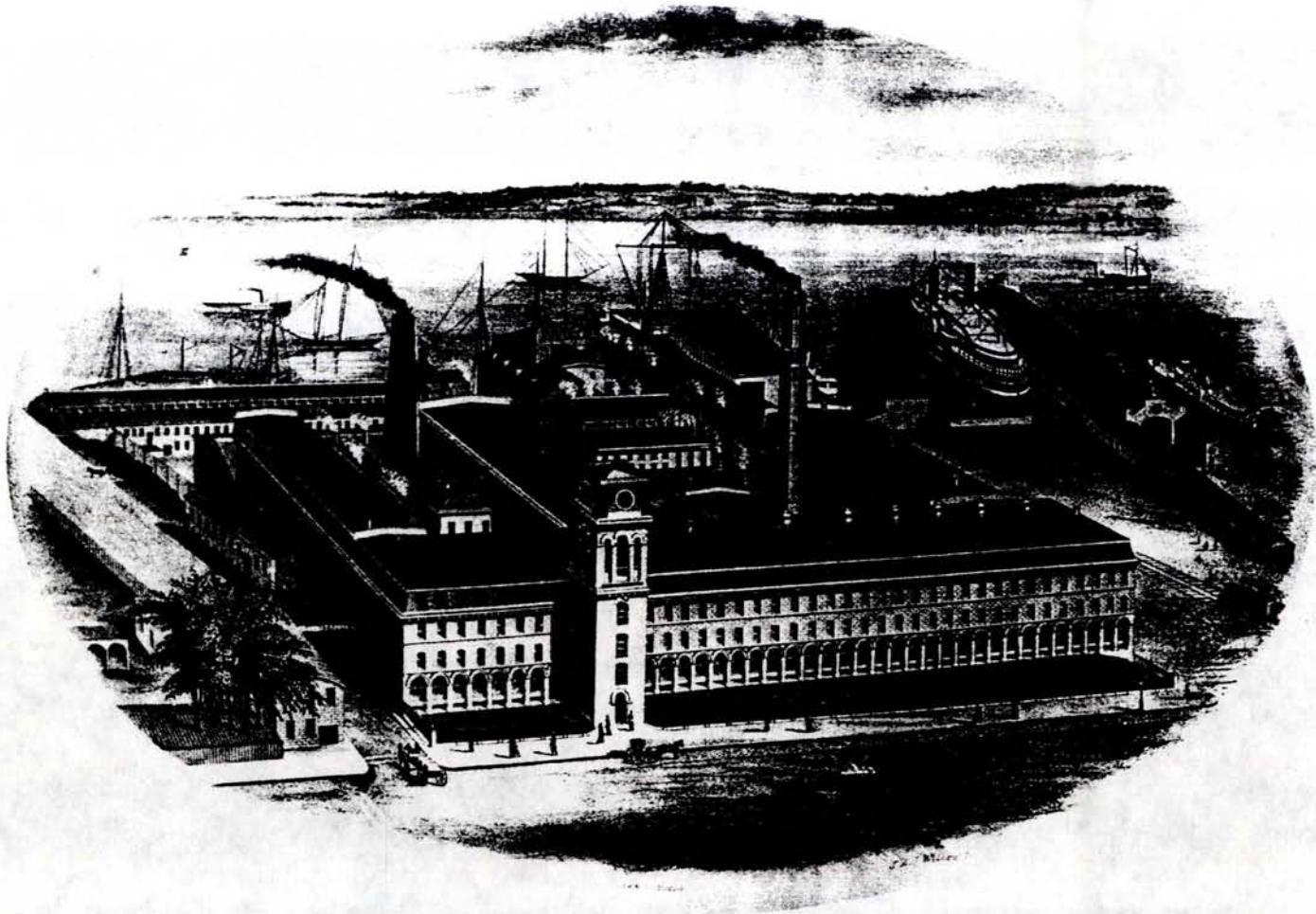
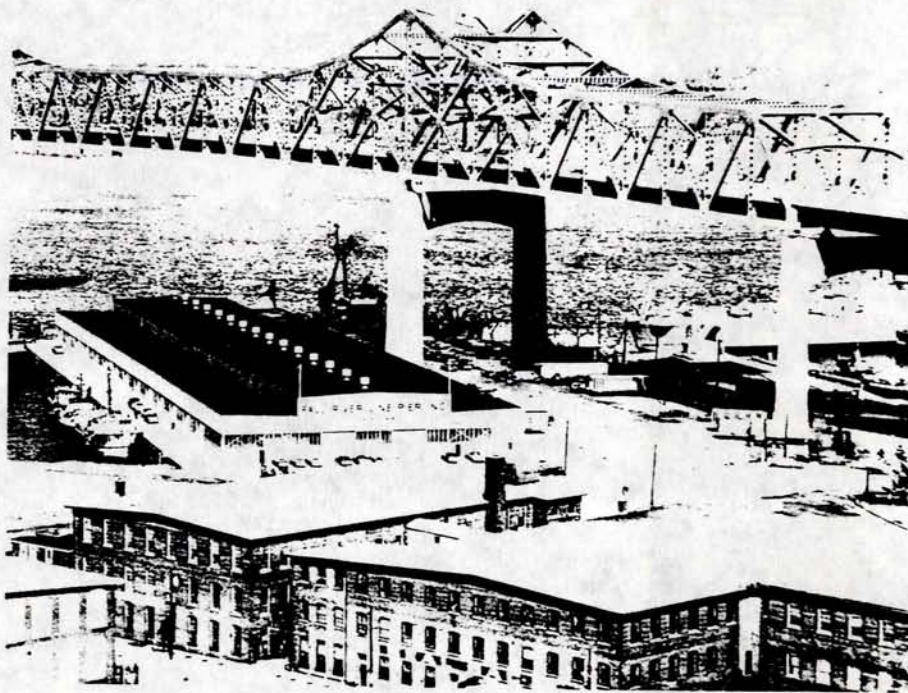


FIG-21 THE AMERICAN  
PRINTWORKS MILL.

FIG-22 BRAGA BRIDGE  
AND FALL RIVER LINE  
PIER.





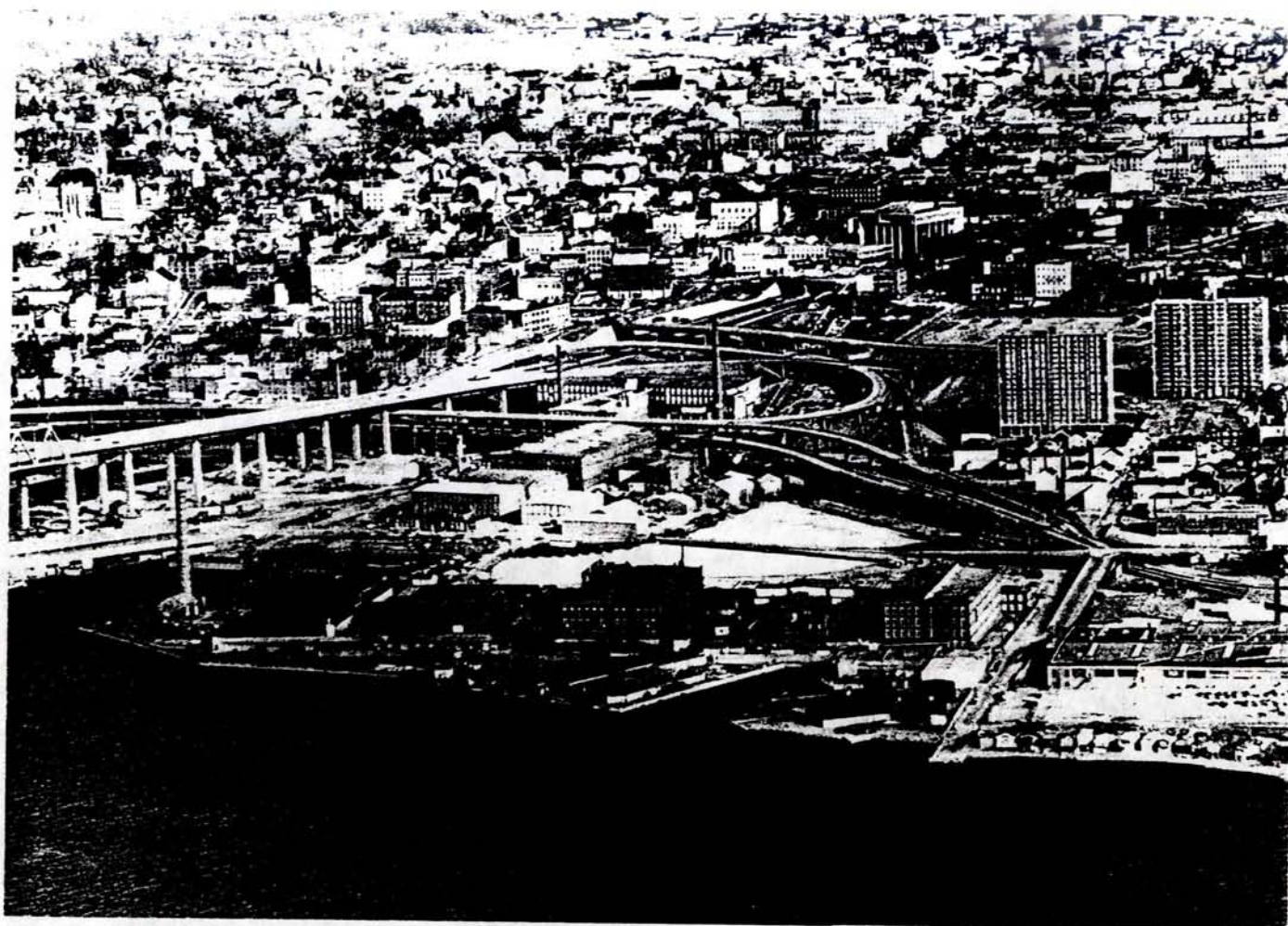


FIG-23 PRESENT DAY  
WATERFRONT.

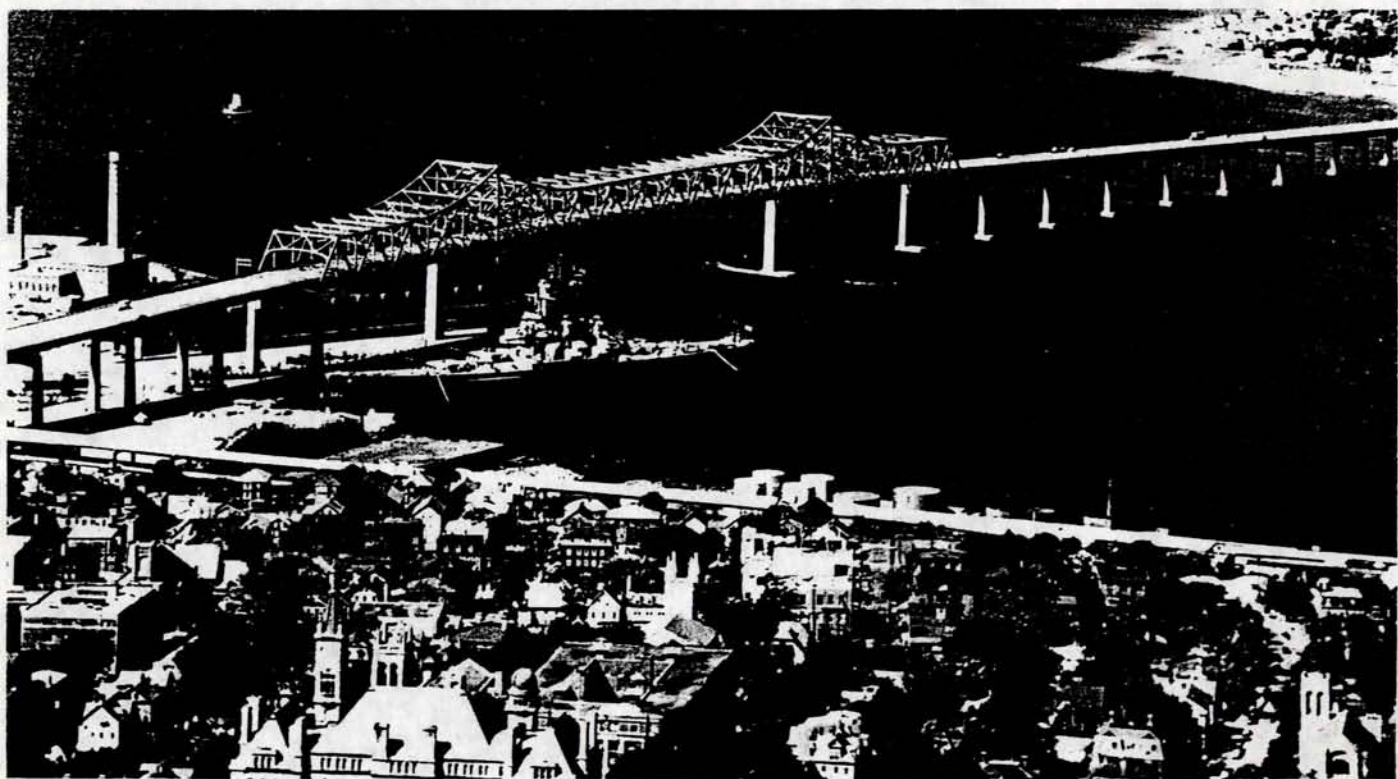
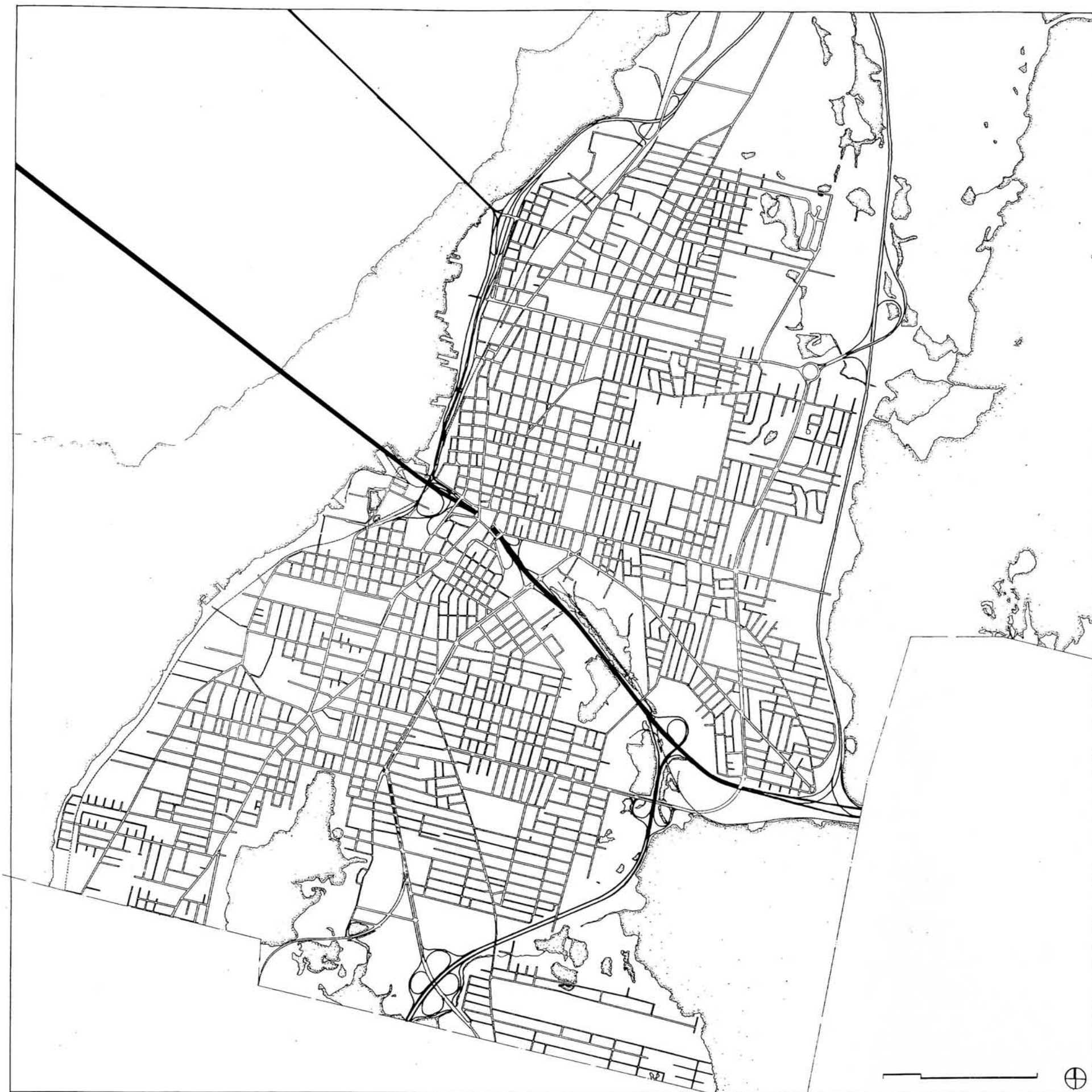


FIG-24 PRESENT DAY  
WATERFRONT.

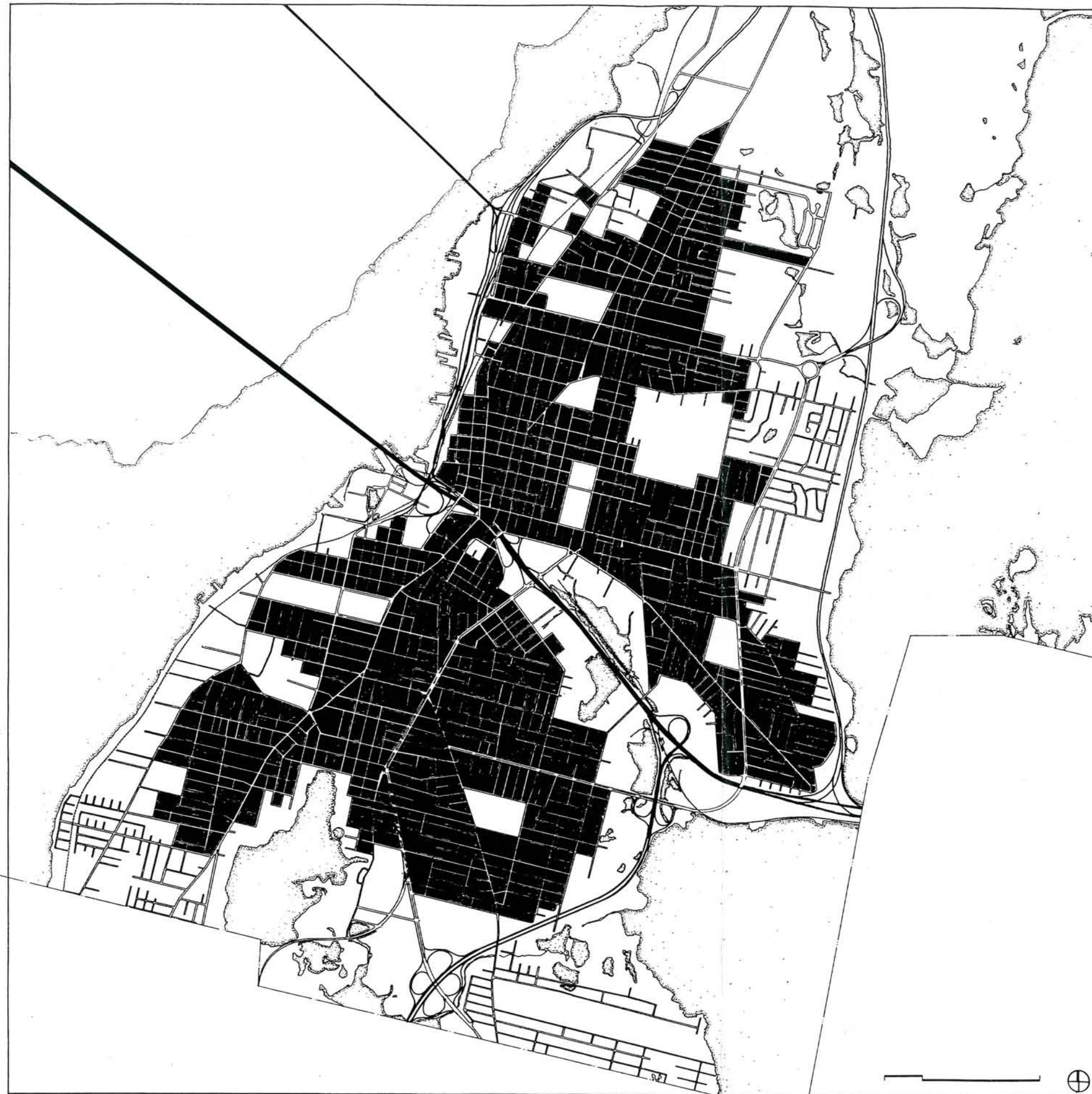




FALL RIVER, MA BLOCK STRUCTURE

This drawing shows the basic make of the city and how the blocks relate to each other. The highway can be seen as a divider cutting the city into two distinct pieces. Without the river the block structure seems somewhat chaotic and highly unresolved in places.

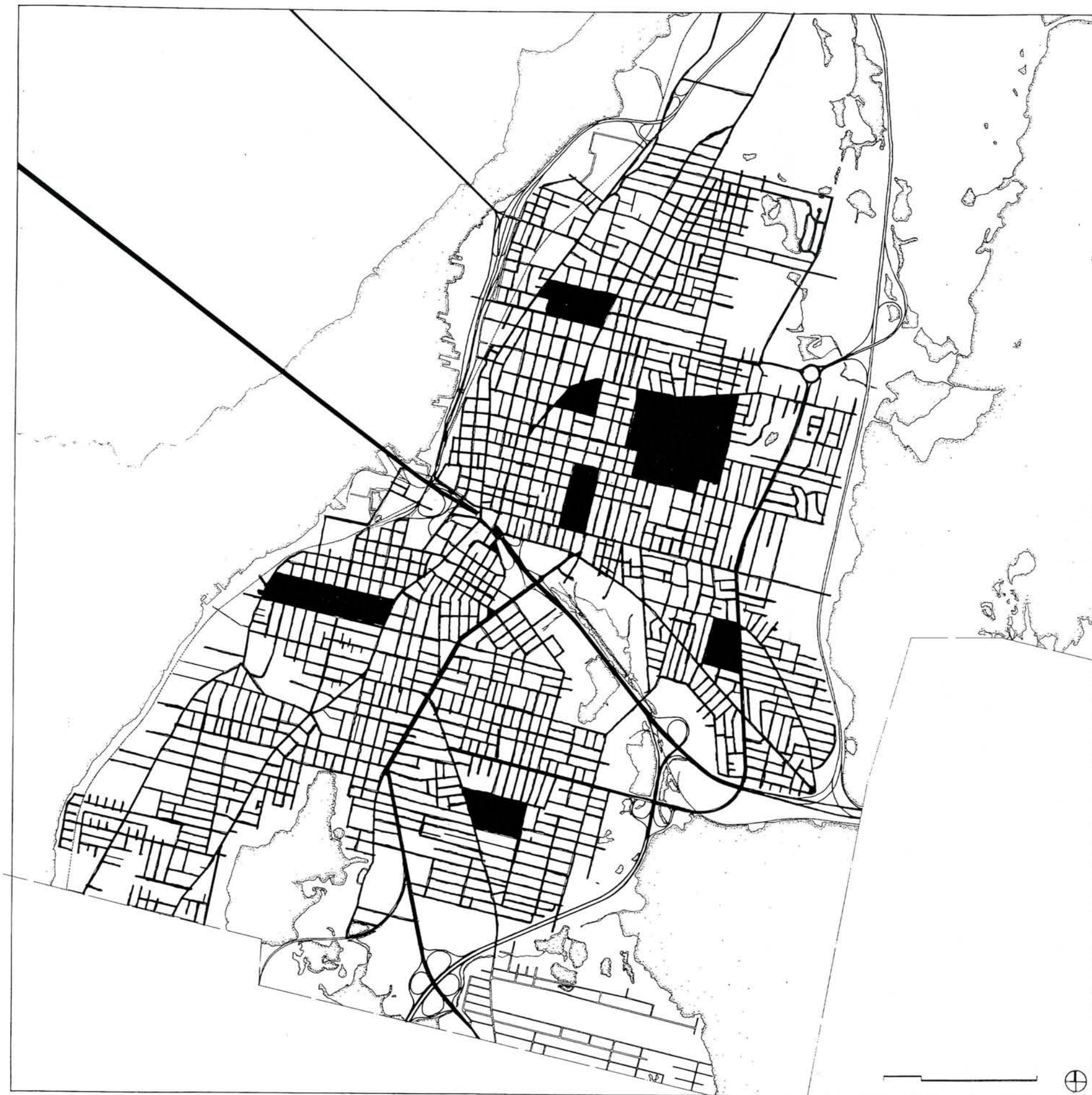




FALL RIVER, MA      FIGURE GROUP

This graphically illustrates the affect of the insertion of a highway on the city fabric. The relationships of the city fabric to the open spaces is relatively clear and well defined. The fabric on interacts with the highway at one point, and that is by building over it. This point is the location of the new city hall. Several sections and different grids can start to be made out in the city fabric.

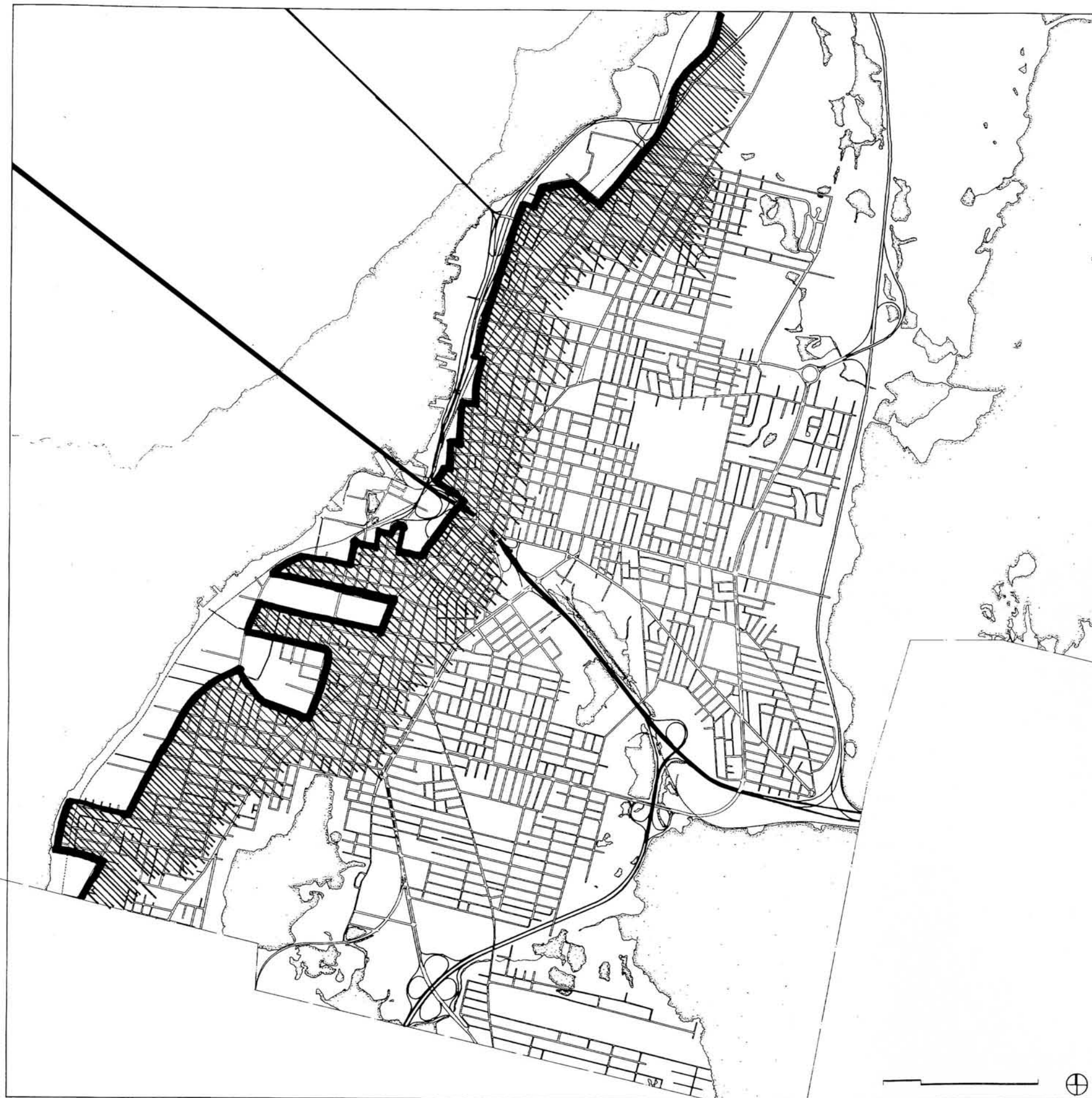




FALL RIVER, MA      PUBLIC SPACES

The reverse figure ground shows the location of the public realm and how these spaces relate to the city as a whole.



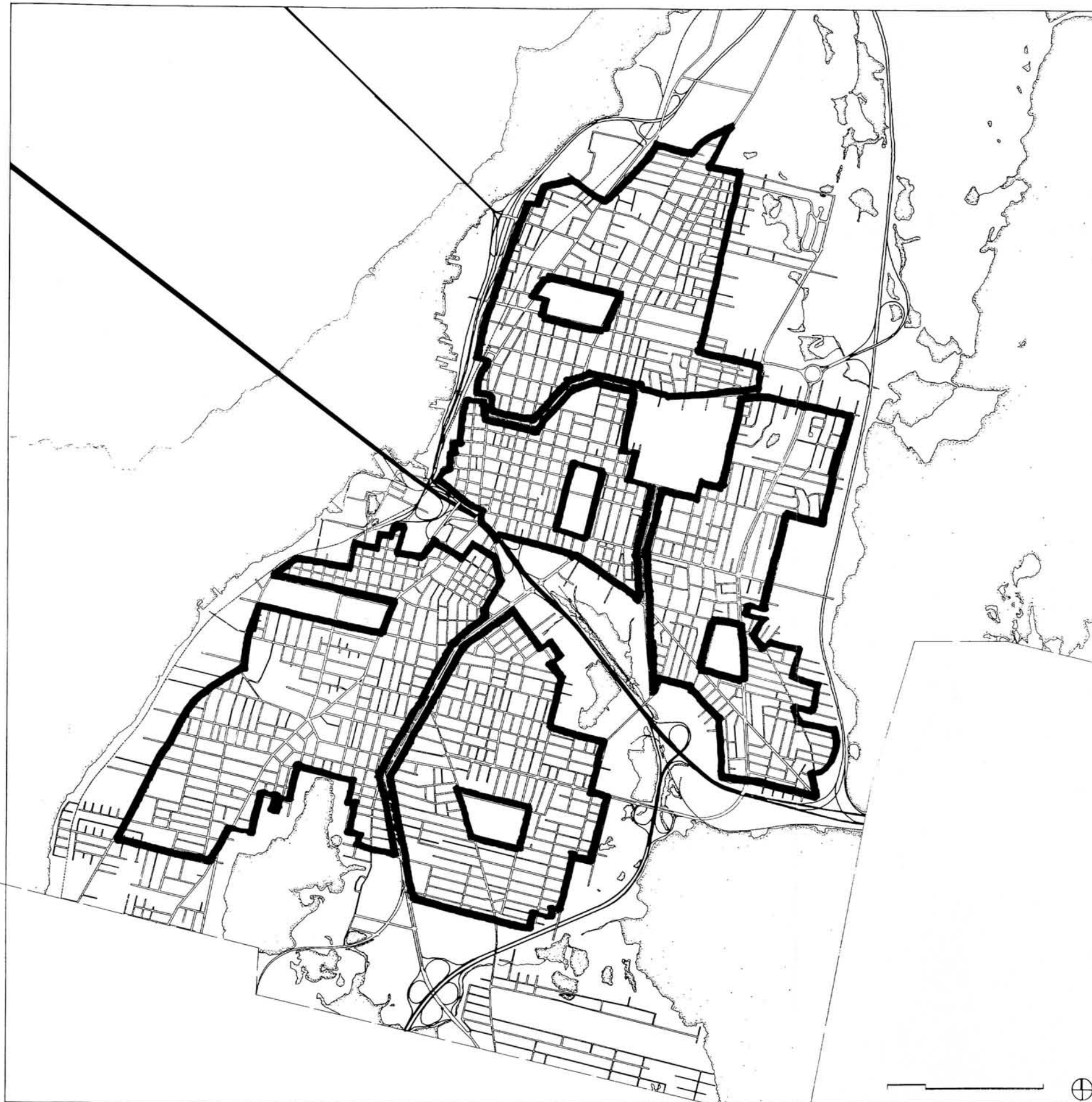


FALL RIVER, MA

URBAN EDGE

The edge of the urban fabric is shown as a thick black line to show the relationship of the city to the water. This drawing gives the indication of the types of spaces created on the waterfront. Spaces like Kennedy Park are well defined, but most are less defined.

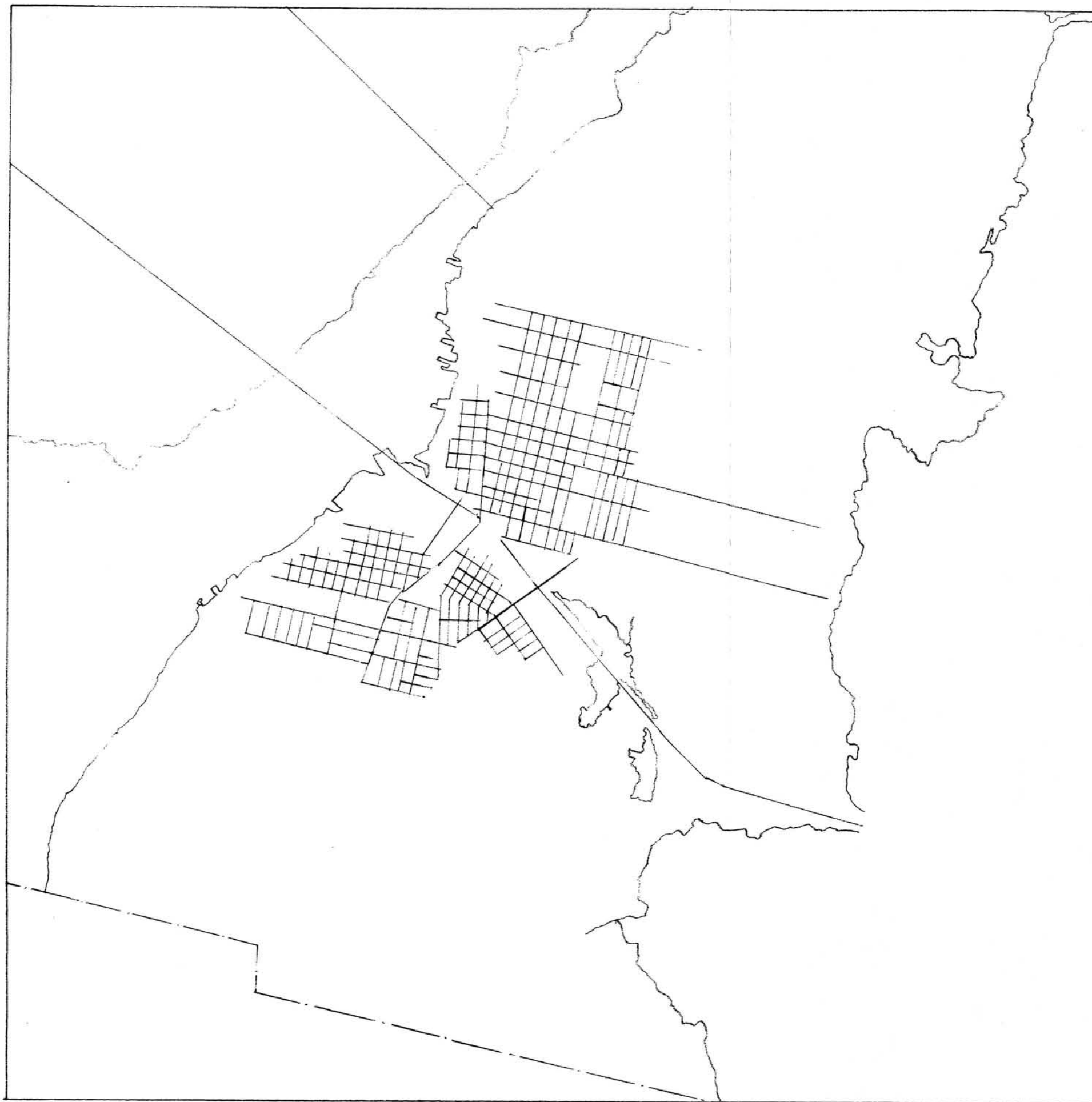




FALL RIVER, MA      CITY SECTORS

The city can be divided into five sectors on the basis of the major streets. Each of these sectors has a green area in the center. Within the sector there is a mix of programmatic uses. When the city had a strong textile industrial base each sector would have its own industrial element. The people who worked there would live around the textile mill in the surrounding neighborhoods. These sectors for the most part were self sufficient. The river served as a divider, though it was not as severe as the highway is presently.





#### FALL RIVER, MA      GRID STRUCTURE

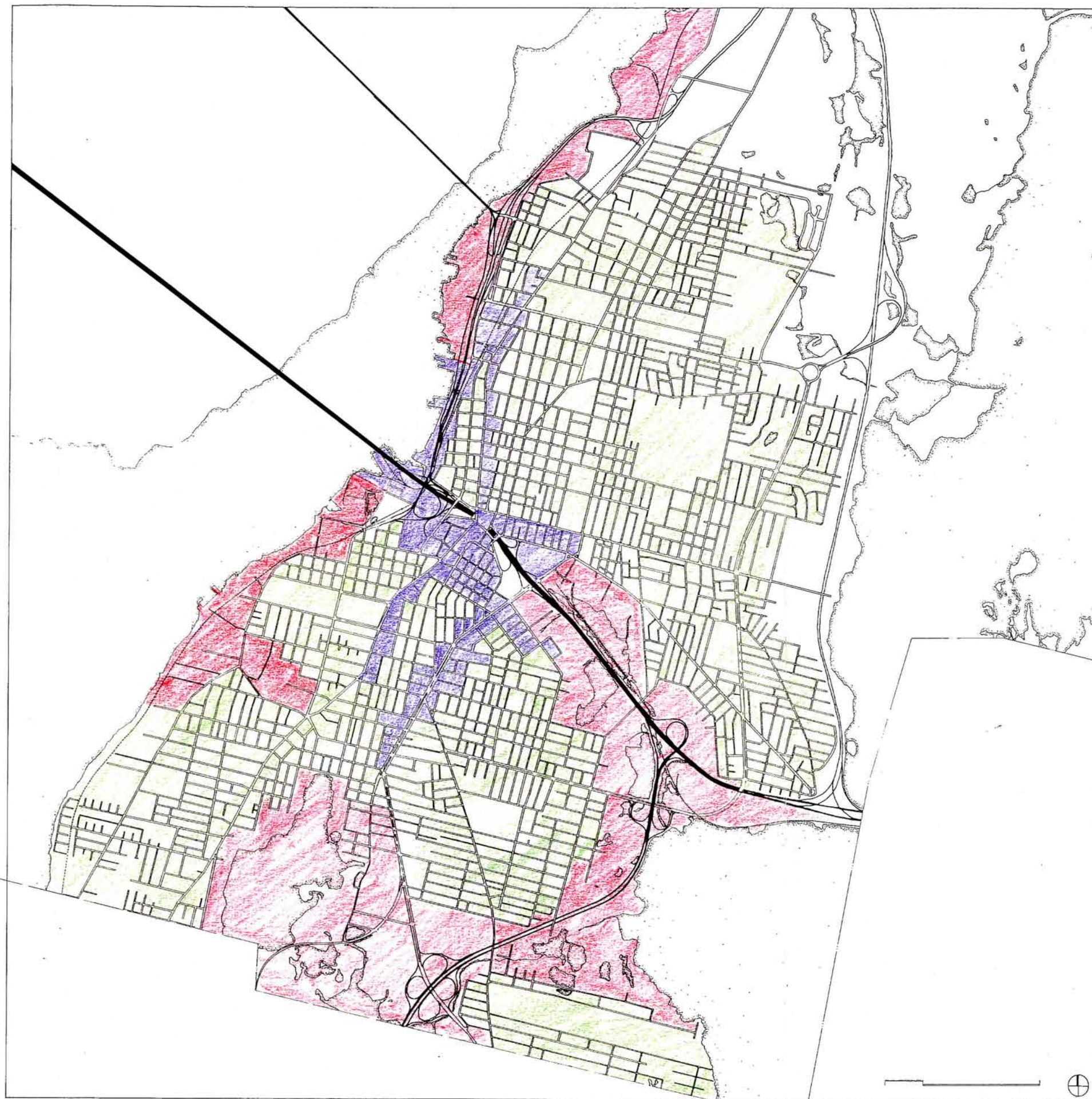
There is an interesting interplay between the urban grids in the city. These grids once related directly to the course of the river as it meandered through the city. In the wake of the bottling of the river and the insertion of the highway these grids are unresolved. The urban grid will serve to inform the urban edge as it meets the water.



FALL RIVER, MA      MAJOR STREETS

Main Street is in red and runs parallel to the waterfront. The street isn't a straight shot and offers a changing view as one moves along it. There are three major streets which run perpendicular to the waterfront completely through the city. There used to be a street which ran along the waterfront but due to the insertion of the highway it is now deformed.





FALL RIVER, MA CITY ZONING

The zoning for the city is as follows:

green=housing  
red=industrial  
blue=business

Currently the waterfront is zoned for mostly industrial uses. This will change. The waterfront has lost its industrial significance and will be rezoned for more public uses.

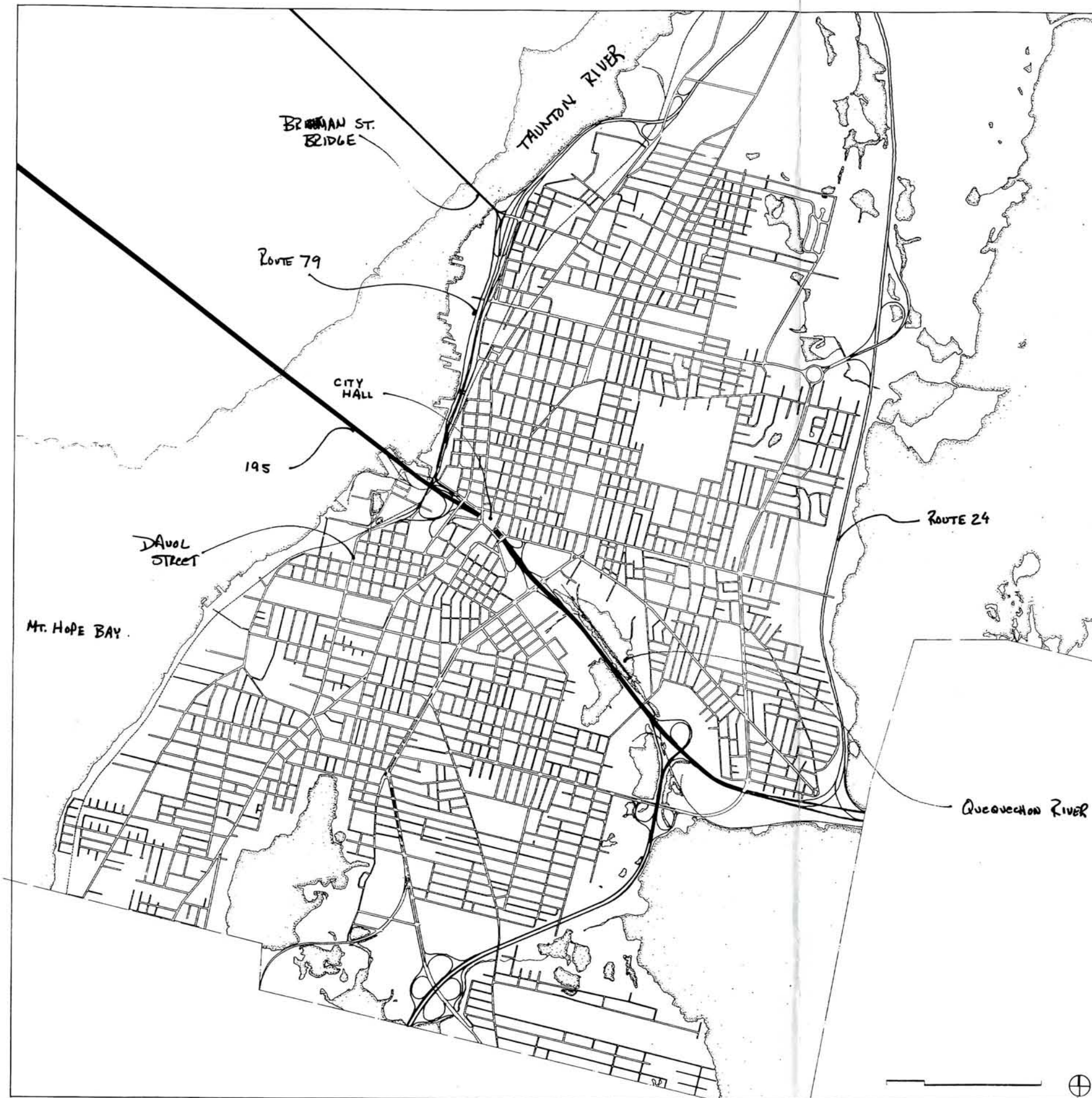




FALL RIVER, MA      PROPOSED SITE

The proposed site for the exploration of this thesis will be within the extents of the shaded area. The boundaries for the site on the east will be Main Street and will stretch from the Briteman Street Bridge to Kennedy Park. The site offers many clues to its development and could become the new focus for the city.

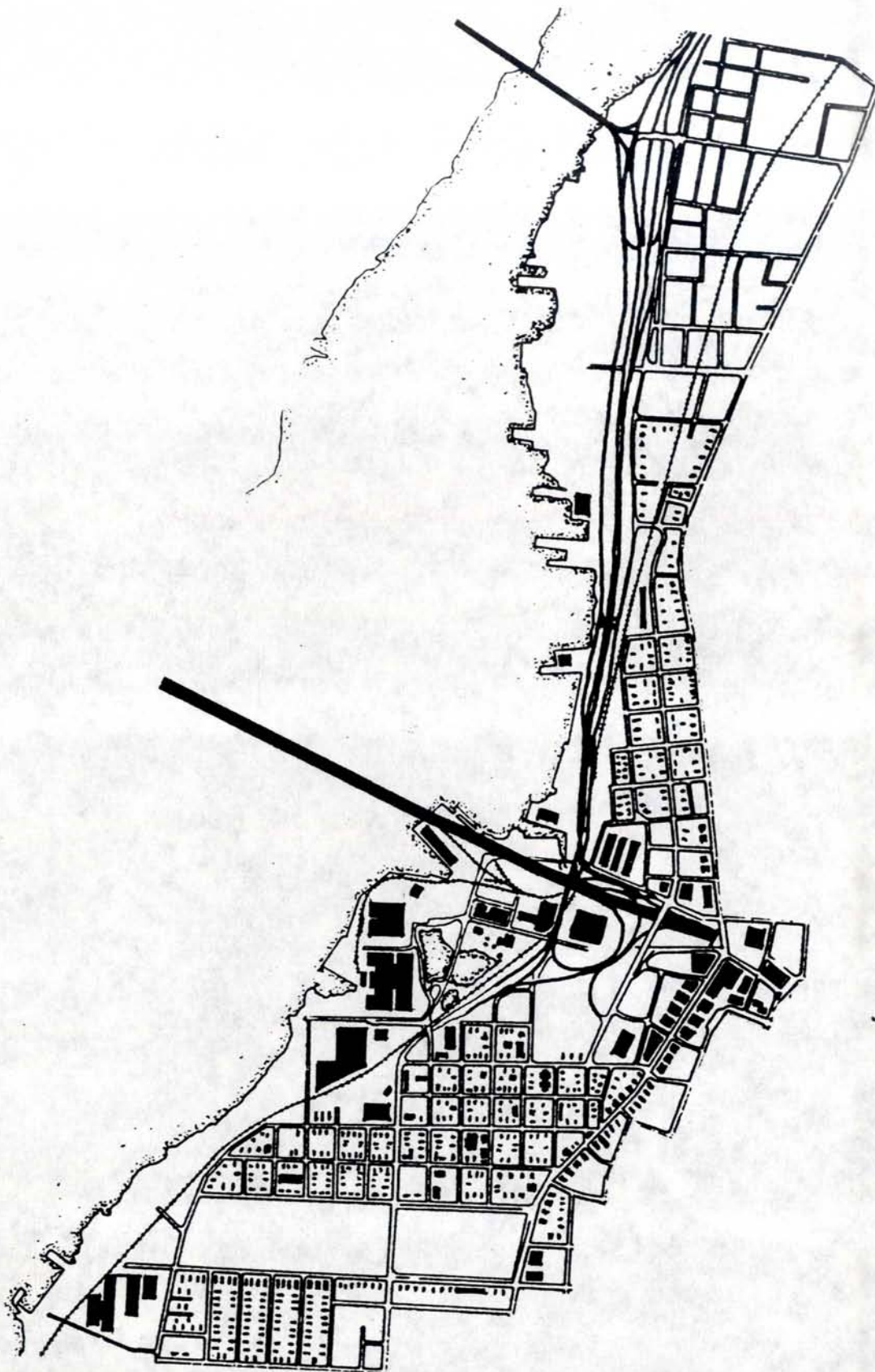




# FALL RIVER, MA ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Fall River is a city which can be approached many ways, by car, boat, or train. Traditionally all of these means of transportation would enter the city at one point on the waterfront. Currently there is a highway (ROUTE 24) which runs along the eastern edge of the city. The highway which cuts through the city (195) is the most traveled route, and is where the majority of the people would enter the city. The problem is that you approach the city at such a high elevation that you don't realize you've entered the city until you pass under city hall midway through. The old approach to the city was via the Brightman Street Bridge. Route 79 serves as a connector between 195 and 24. This route is redundant and destroyed Davol Street which ran the length of the waterfront. Throughout the city there is an interesting dichotomy between the scales of the buildings, from the massive mill to the small three level apartment. The materials of the buildings further enhance this, the granite of the mill as compared to the wood balloon frame of the apartment. The city offers a rich mix of conditions and clues to the interpretation of the waterfront development.





PROPOSED SITE FIGURE GROUND





## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The program will manifest itself in buildings which might recall the historic imagery of the past while looking toward the future. The sense of place will be made by the incorporation of the different programmatic elements. The elements which constitute the program will serve to mediate between land and water. The program will serve to redefine the function of the waterfront, as well as reconstitute the function of mainstreet, in addition the program will restore the symbolic importance of the waterfront and mainstreet.

### PROGRAM LIST:

- 1.)Textile Research Institute
- 2.)Naval Museum
- 3.)Theater
- 4.)Convention Center
- 5.)Cultural/Community Center
- 6.)Market Space
- 7.)Terminal for Small Cruise Ships
- 8.)Supportive Fabric
  - a.)Housing
  - b.)Office Space
  - c.)Commercial
  - d.)Parking
  - e.)Hotel
  - f.)Green Areas/Parks

The list above indicates program functions that could become the special pieces which comprise the waterfront fabric. The supportive fabric allows this to happen, it creates the environment in which these special events occur. These elements could spawn future growth in the waterfront and create a new focus for the city.



## PROGRAM

### MAJOR PROGRAMMATIC ELEMENTS:

#### **Textile Research Institute-**

The manufacture of textiles probably can't be brought back to the city, but the city could benefit from a research institute to promote innovation in the textile industry. This could serve to recall the importance of the textile industry to the area. The institute could be placed within one of the old mill buildings on the waterfront. Within the research institute a textile museum which covers the history of the production of textiles as well as the garments themselves.

#### **Naval Museum-**

There is a rich history of steam ships which used to carry passengers from Boston and New York to the city of Fall River, specifically from the Fall River Line Company. Currently Fall River is home to the battleship USS Massachusetts, a destroyer, pt boat, and a submarine. These vessels are moored in Fall River as a floating museum, This is the only facility like this in the United States. The reorganization and expansion of this facility with more on shore displays, both passive and active could serve to promote this facility as a major element on the waterfront. It already serves as a major tourist attraction for the city and should be treated as a major focal piece on the waterfront. Part of the on shore museum would be devoted to the rich steamship heritage of the Fall River Line.

#### **Theater-**

The theater could serve as a much needed cultural piece on the waterfront. The city has very strong ethnic groups and the idea behind the theater is that it could be open to the

production of plays from the various ethnic groups in the city. This could be a vehicle to educate the public about the diversity of the ethnic mix in the city. Hopefully other plays and maybe a symphony would arise from the addition of this theater to the city. The theater will also serve to activate the waterfront with activity at night not just during the day. The theater will be made up of a blackbox type, proscenium stage, as well as an outdoor theater.

#### **Convention Center-**

The city lacks a major gathering space or any type of large scale indoor exhibition space for that matter. This type of program will attract conventions and events to the city which otherwise would have gone elsewhere. This would spawn a growth in the hotel industry in the area and open up the city to more people as well as increase the money put into the local economy.

#### **Cultural/Community Center-**

This could allow the community to come together and share in their diverse cultures. Education of the people of the city, about the different cultures that make up the city could go a long way toward alleviating hostilities between the different groups. The people of Fall River take great pride in their ethnic heritage. The center could have a cross cultural library as well as exhibition space devoted to the the different cultures. The center could also have practical things like day care and classes of various types. I see the center as a major educational tool on the waterfront.

#### **Market Space-**

The city of Fall River currently has various types of markets during the week. These markets vary from a farmers market to



a fisherman's market. These markets are scattered throughout the edge of the city, it is my intention to bring the markets to the waterfront which could act as the new focus for the city. The market space could be a major public space on the waterfront and could serve as a link between the old fabric of the city and the new waterfront fabric.

### **Ship Terminal-**

The terminal might be used to bring people in from the various cruise lines which operate in the area, they usually come in from Newport or Boston to shop at the textile outlet stores scattered throughout the city. The terminal will act as a gate to the city and be the start of the sequence from the waters edge to the city. Conversely it will act as a point of departure as well and be the termination of the sequence from the city to the waters edge and beyond.

### **SUPPORTIVE PROGRAMMATIC ELEMENTS:**

#### **Housing-**

Housing will be an integral part of the waterfront fabric and will activate the waterfront by keeping people there. Housing as a typology will not be seen as a monument as the modernist sees it, but as a supportive piece that will help to reinforce the special programmatic pieces. Housing will bring with it the requirement of many different programmatic functions which serve to support the inhabitants.

#### **Office Space-**

The type of office space brought to the area could be small to medium in nature and will spread out horizontally rather than vertically. This space could fill the huge gap in the market of the area, and could help transform the city from a

residential city which serves Boston to one that has a reasonable business infrastructure. The hope is that the people working in this office space will live on the waterfront reducing the need for the intrusion of the automobile.

### **Parking-**

The automobile is here to stay and rather than ignore it it will be incorporated into the design. A series of parking facilities will be proposed to handle the residents cars as well as visitors cars. The typology for the parking will be in garages as well as in the specific spaces within the urban block. I intend to remove the vehicles from the street by giving them a place to park. Parts of the waterfront will operate with the automobile and other secondary routes will restrict automobile access creating pedestrian streets.

PARKING RATIO: RETAIL=1/1000 SF

OFFICE=1/600 SF

RESIDENTIAL=1/DWELLING UNIT + 10%(VISITOR)

HOTEL=1/ROOM(GUEST) + 1/15 ROOMS(EMPLOYEE)

MUSEUM=1/2000 SF

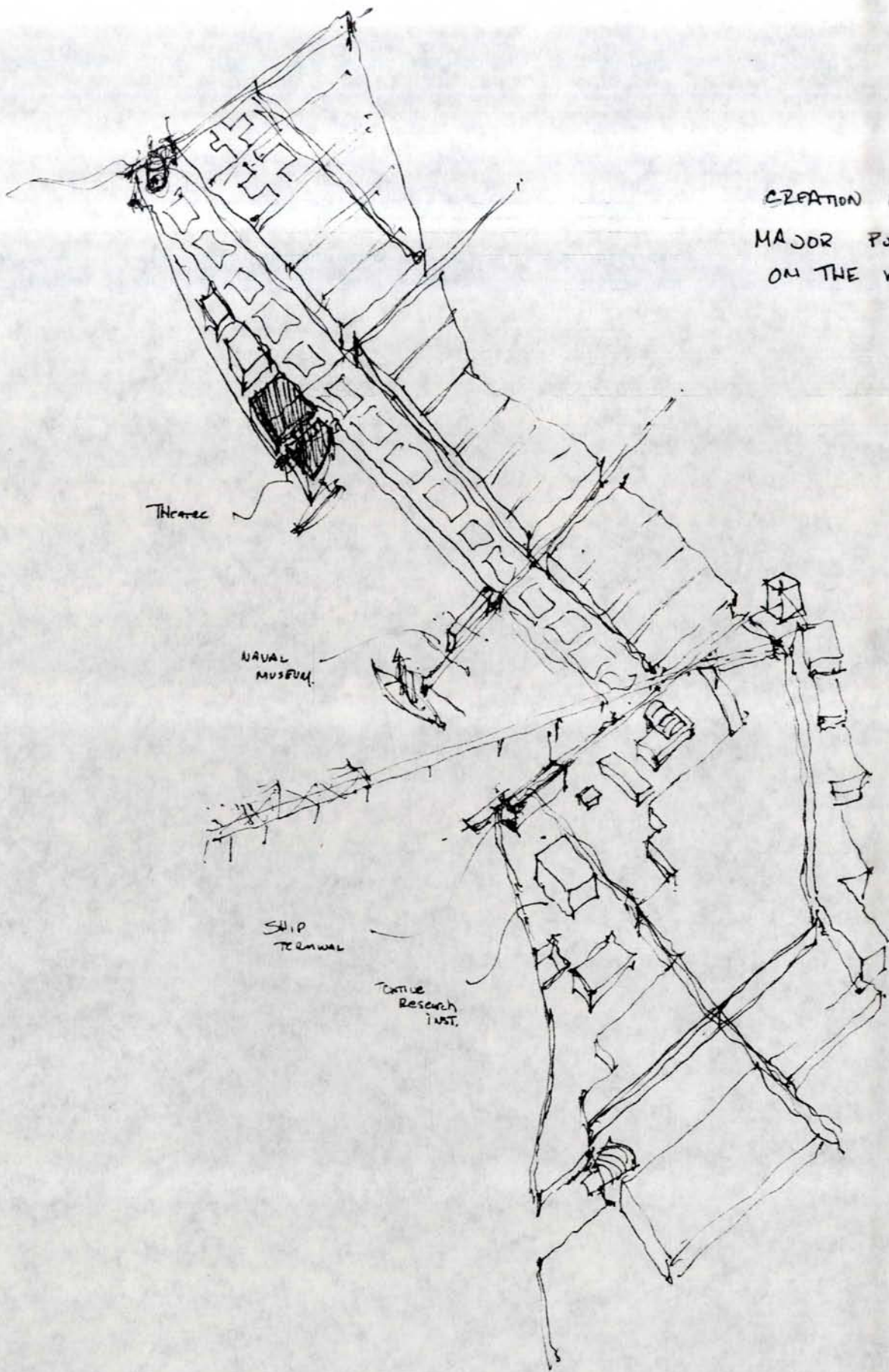
### **Green Areas/Parks-**

These spaces are by no means thought of as unimportant, but they will serve to link the shattered fabric, as well as provide public recreational spaces. The importance of these spaces will depend on the fabric around it and its location within the waterfront.

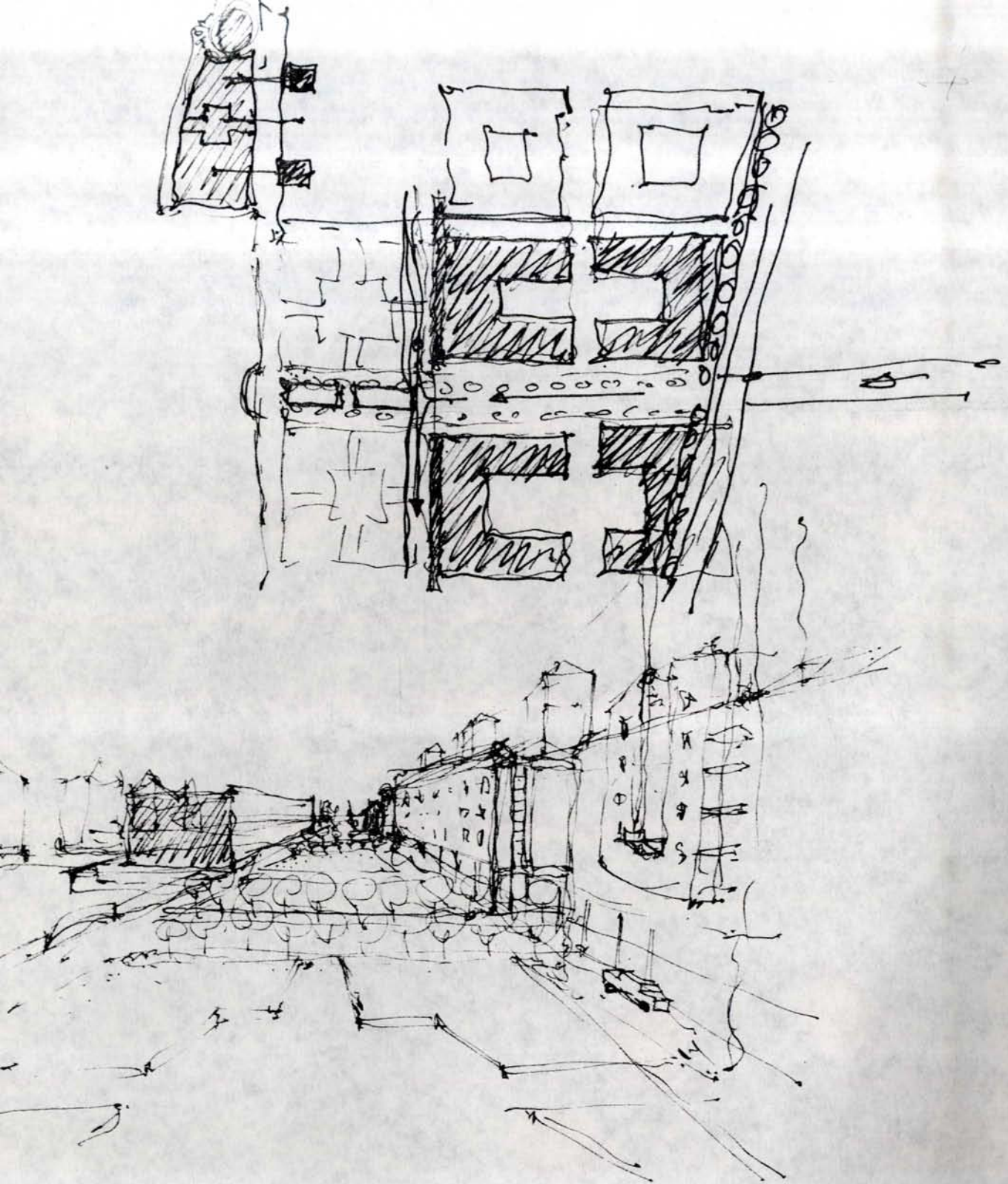




CREATION OF A  
MAJOR PUBLIC SPACE  
ON THE WATERFRONT.



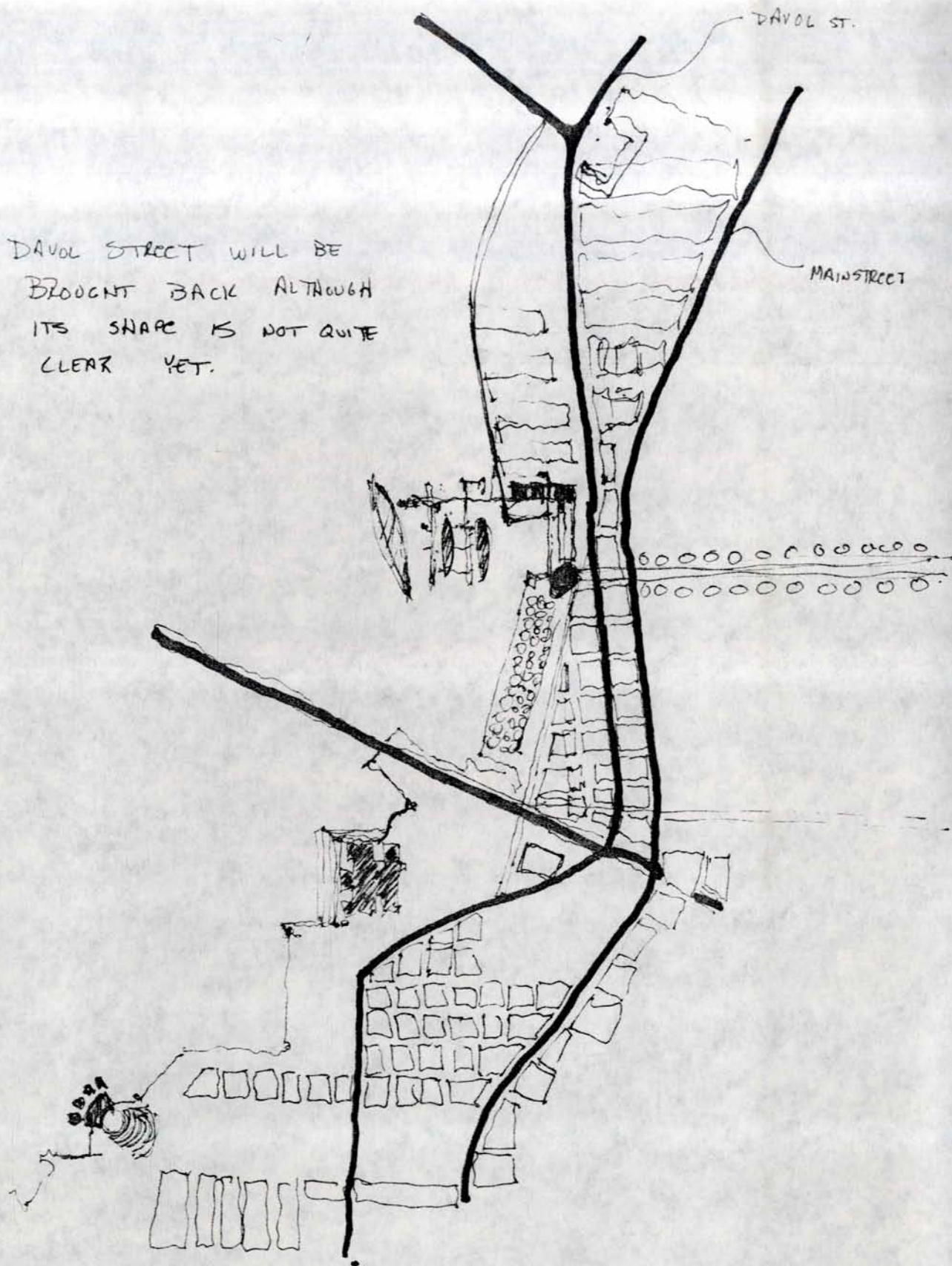




CREATION OF SPACE ALONG  
THE WATER FRONT WITH  
OBJECT PIECES ALONG EDGE AGAINST  
BACKDROP OF URBAN EDGE.

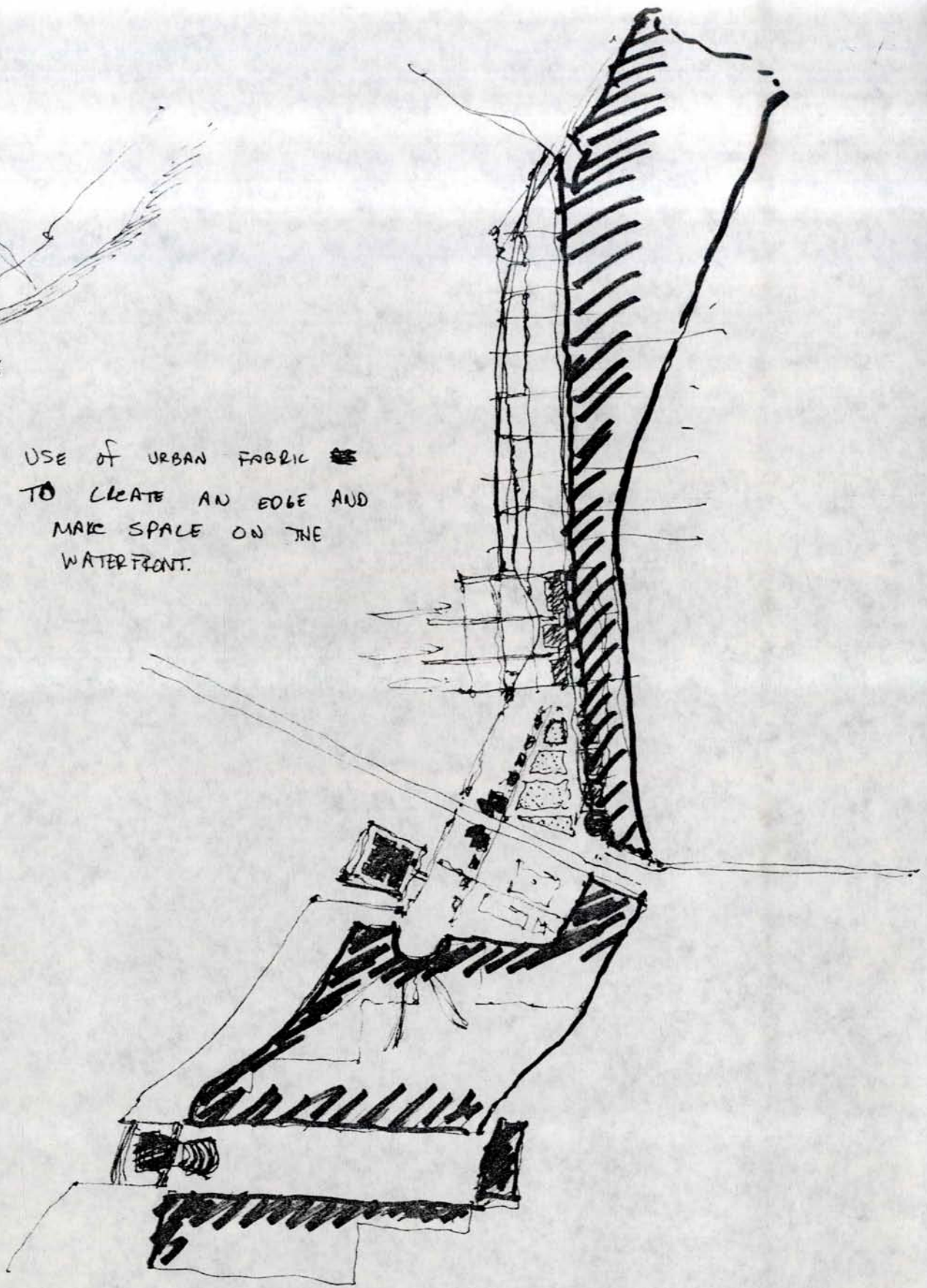


DAVOL STREET WILL BE  
BROUGHT BACK ALTHOUGH  
ITS SHARE IS NOT QUITE  
CLEAR YET.

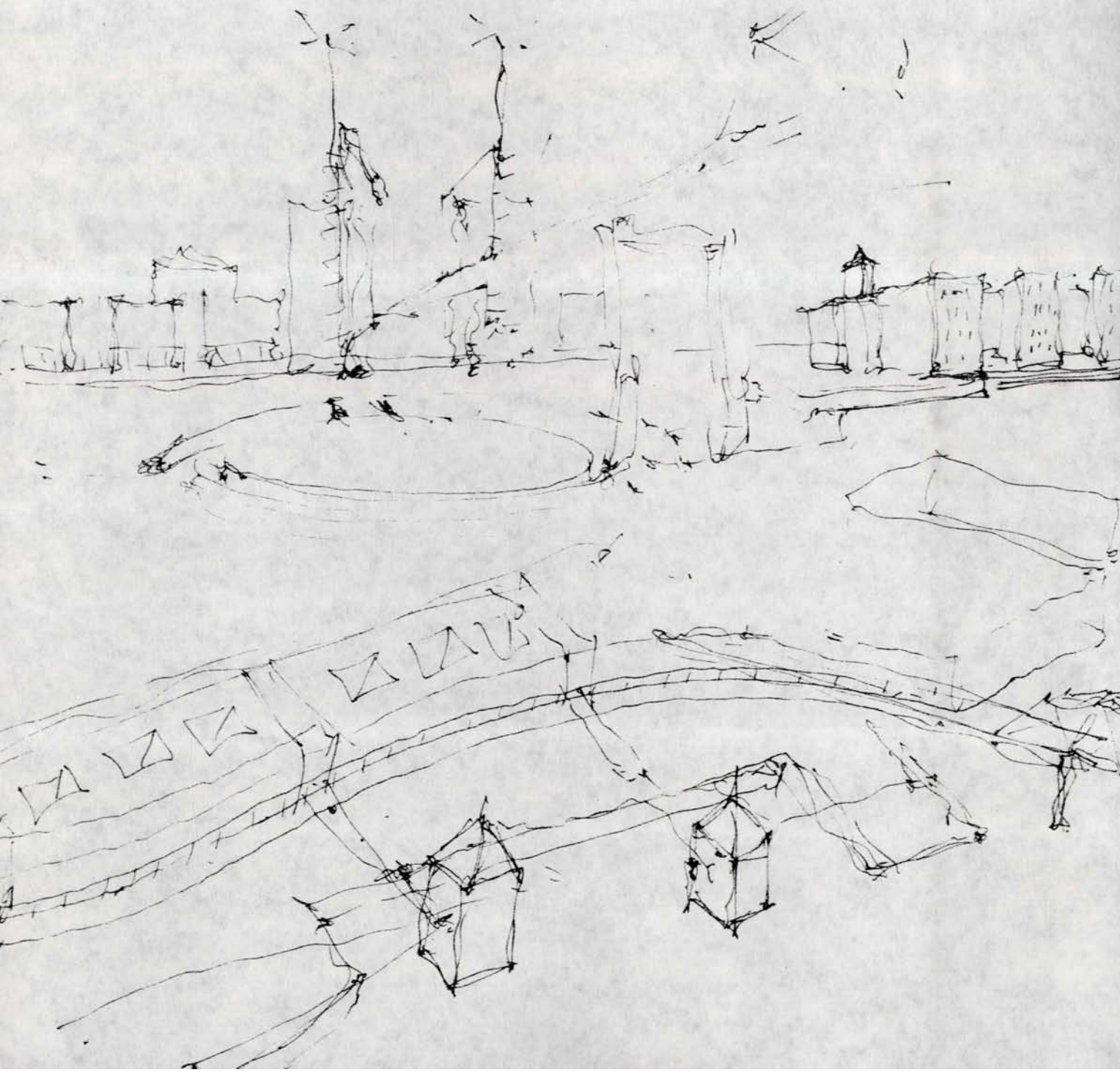




USE OF URBAN FABRIC ~~IS~~  
TO CREATE AN EDGE AND  
MAKE SPACE ON THE  
WATERFRONT.



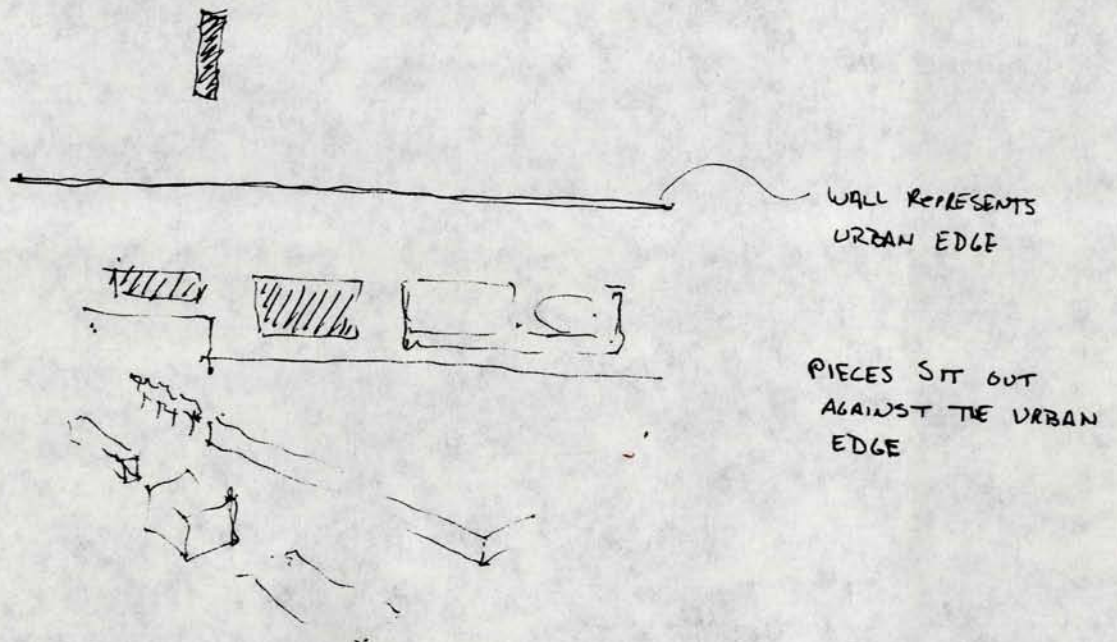
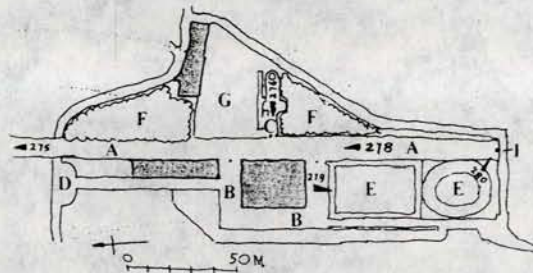
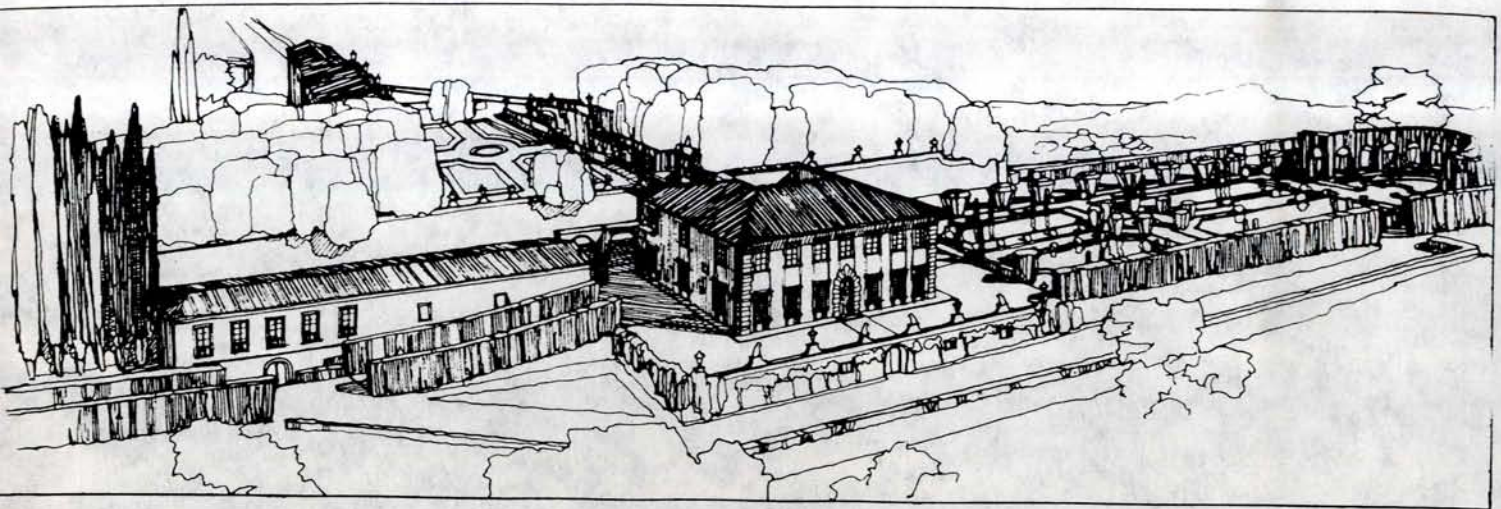
- ISSUE OF GATEWAY/ENTRY TO THE CITY.
- ENTRY TO THE CITY





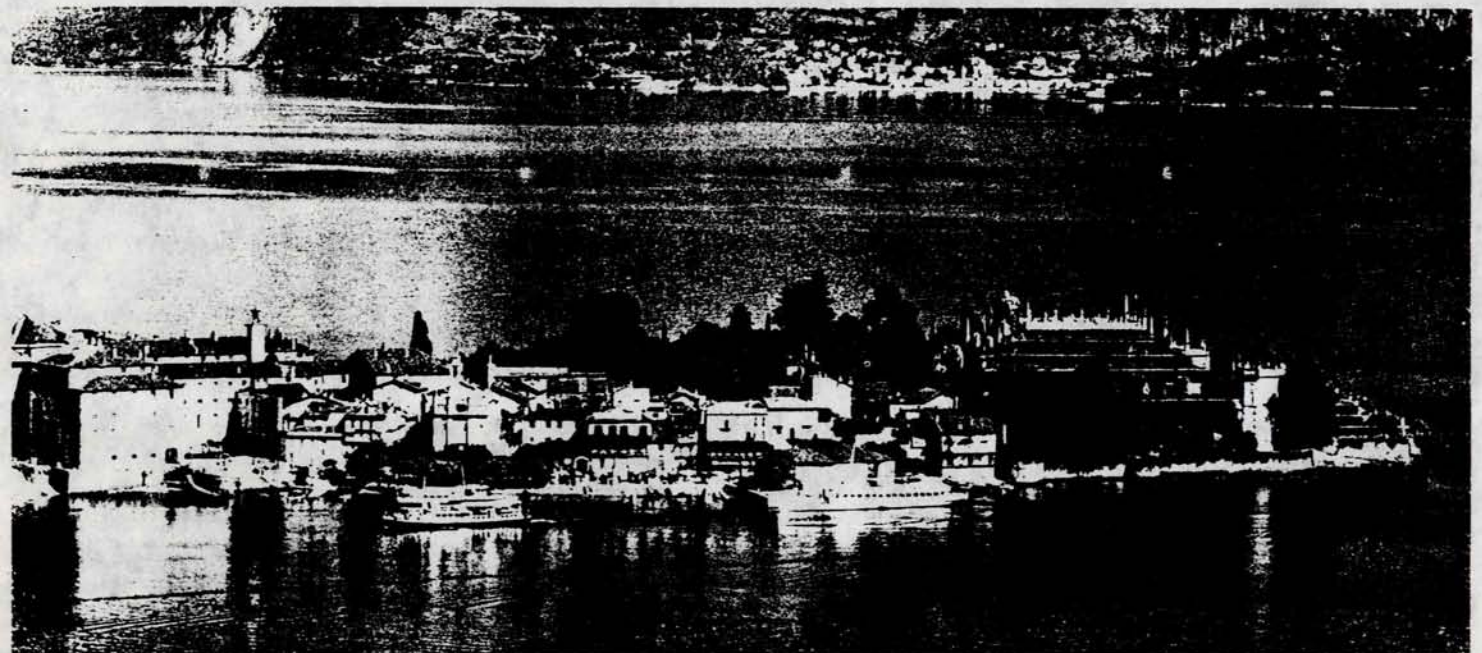
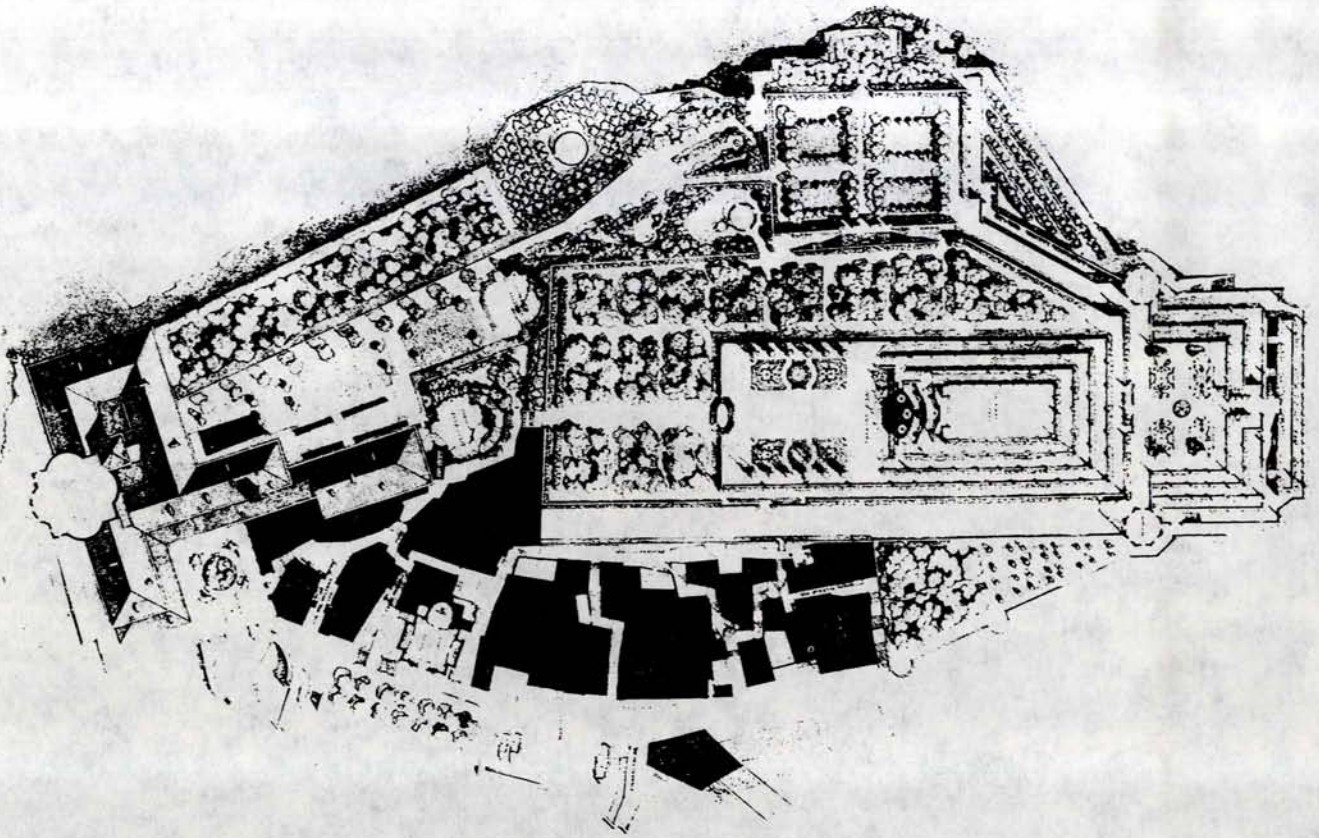


# VILLA GAMBERAIA



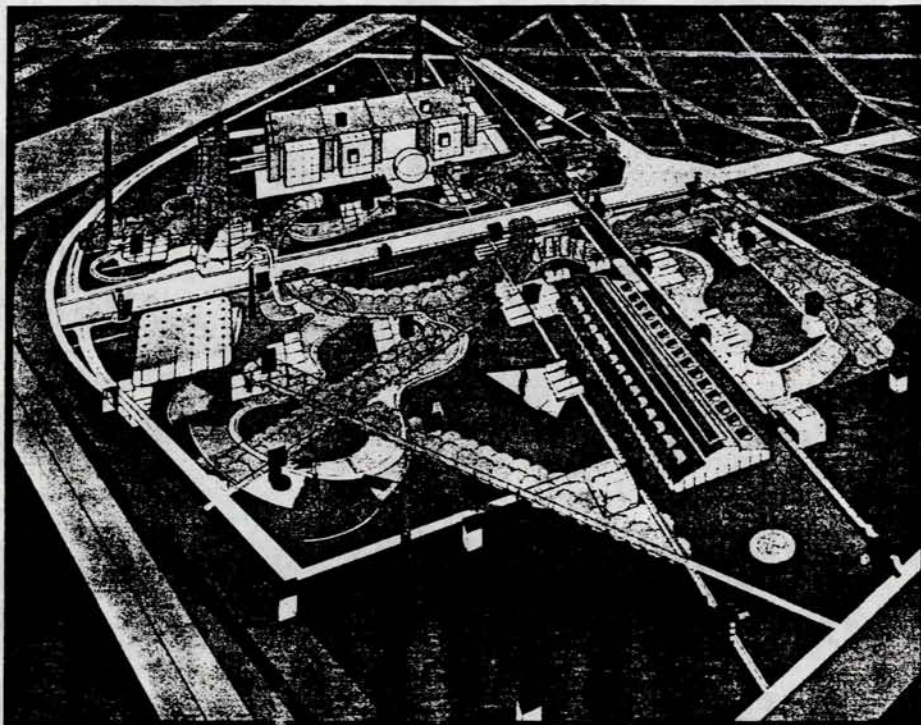
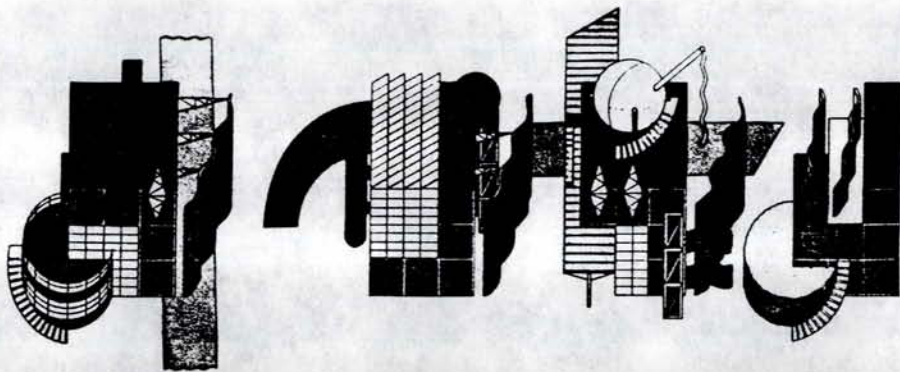


ISO BELLA ON LAKE MAGGIORE

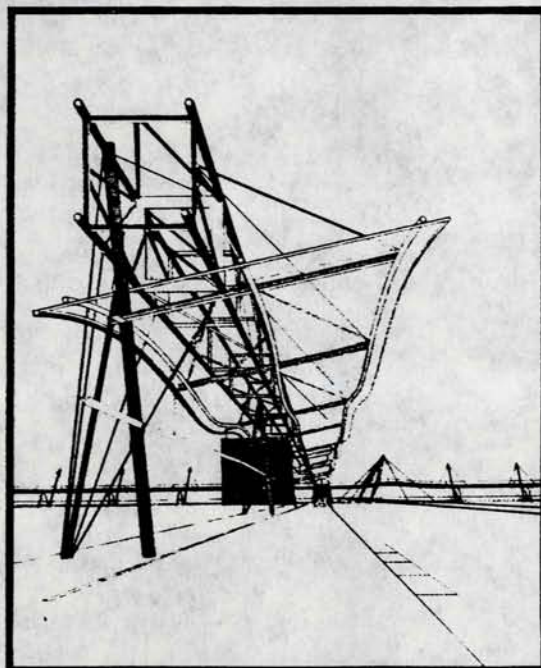


THE EDGE  
FORMED BY BUILDINGS CREATES A SPACE ON  
THE WATERFRONT.

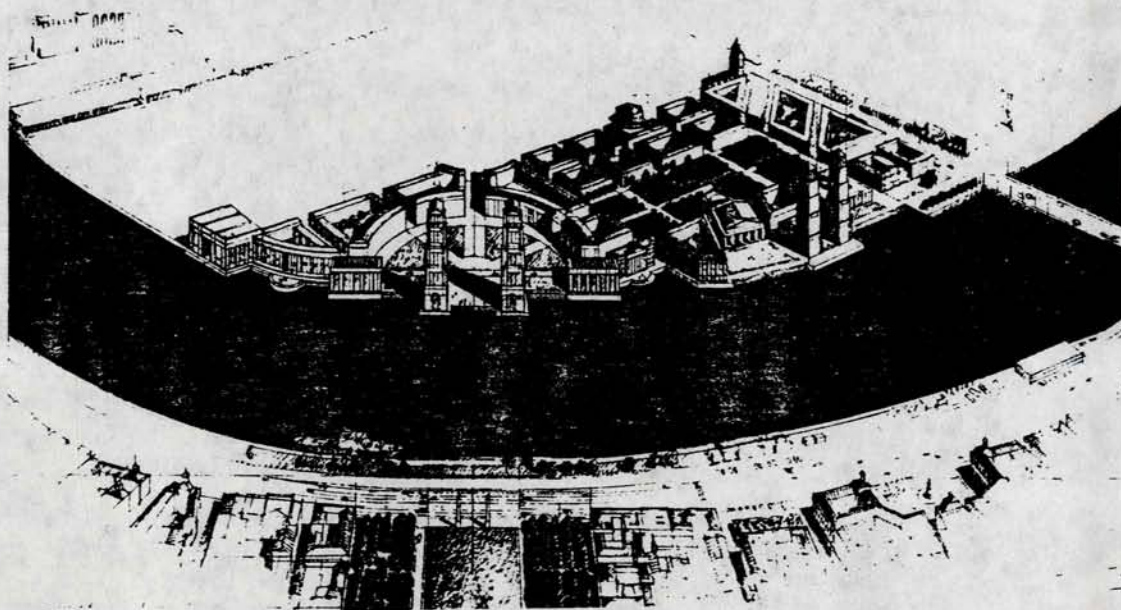
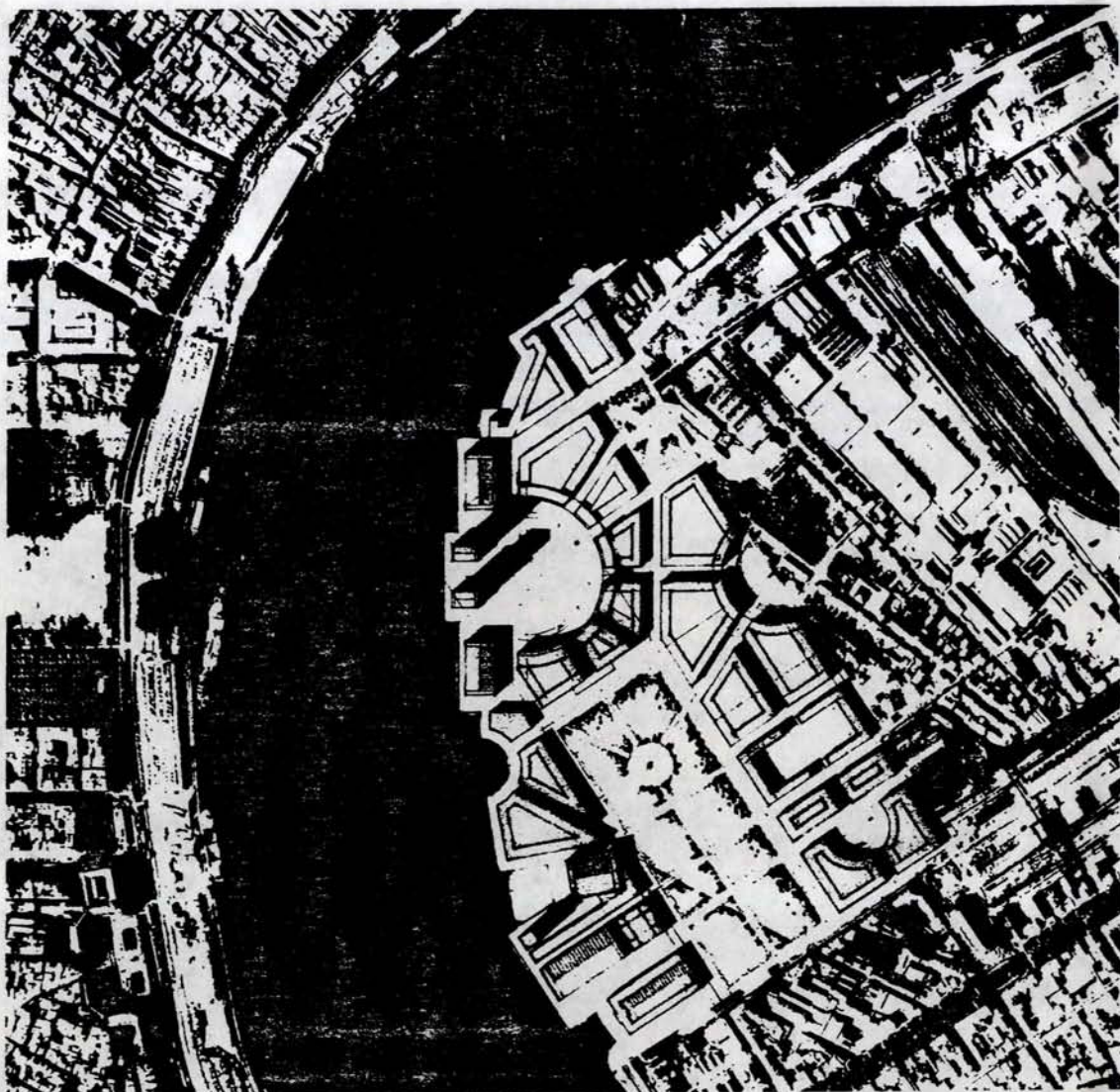




THE RELATIONSHIP OF  
THE THREE SYSTEMS  
OF POINTS TO THE WHOLE

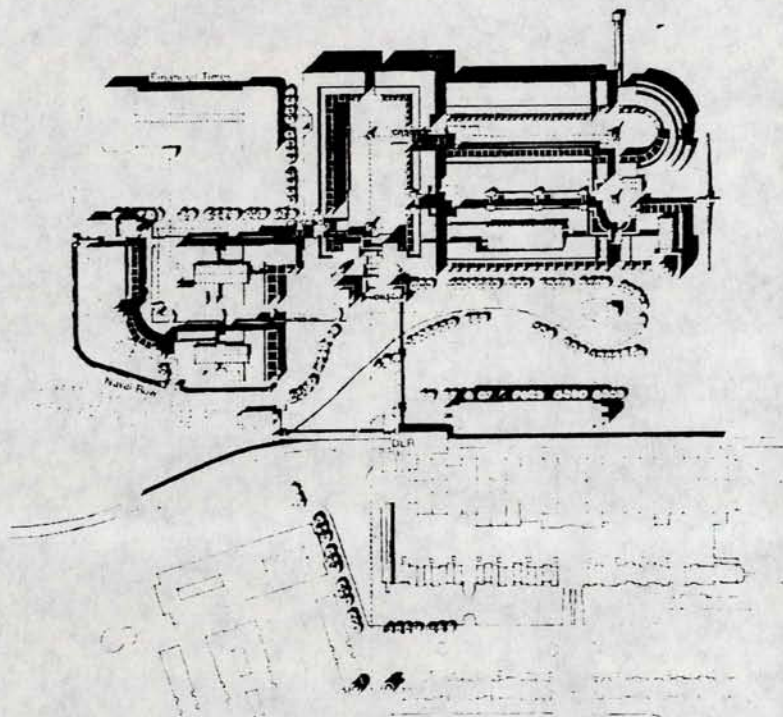
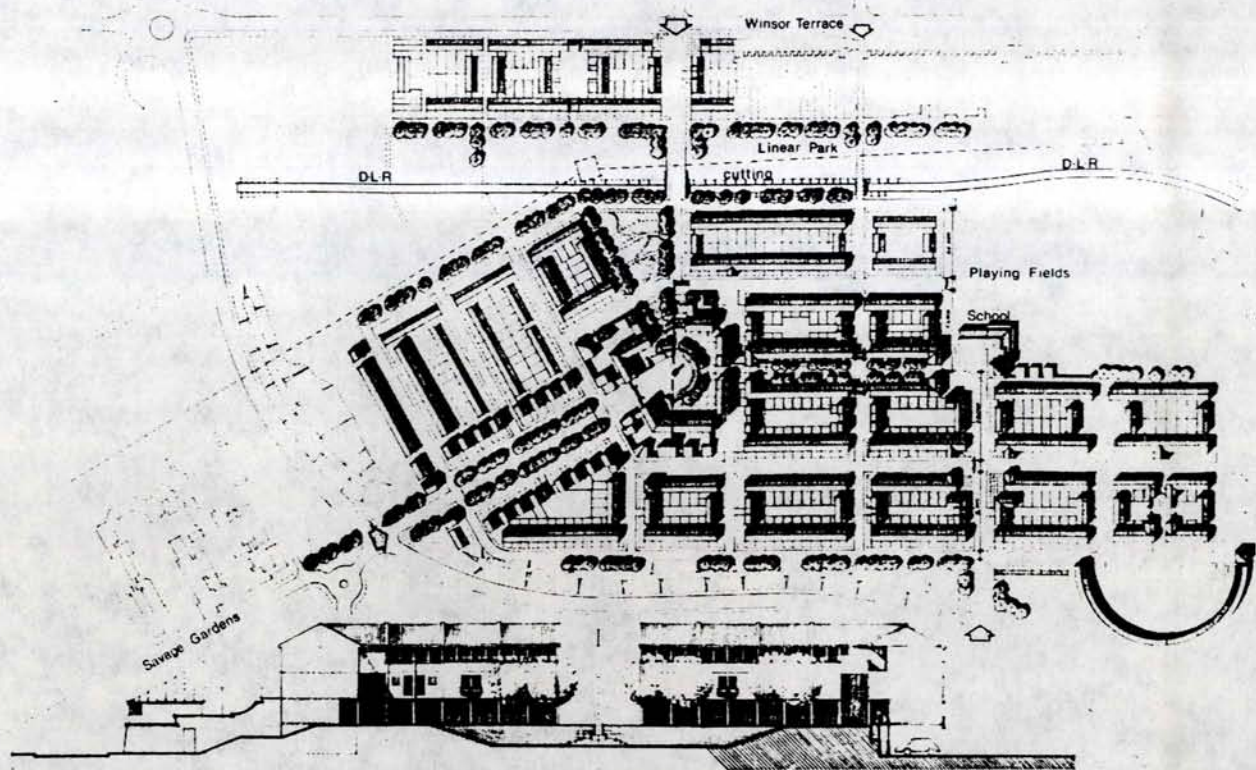






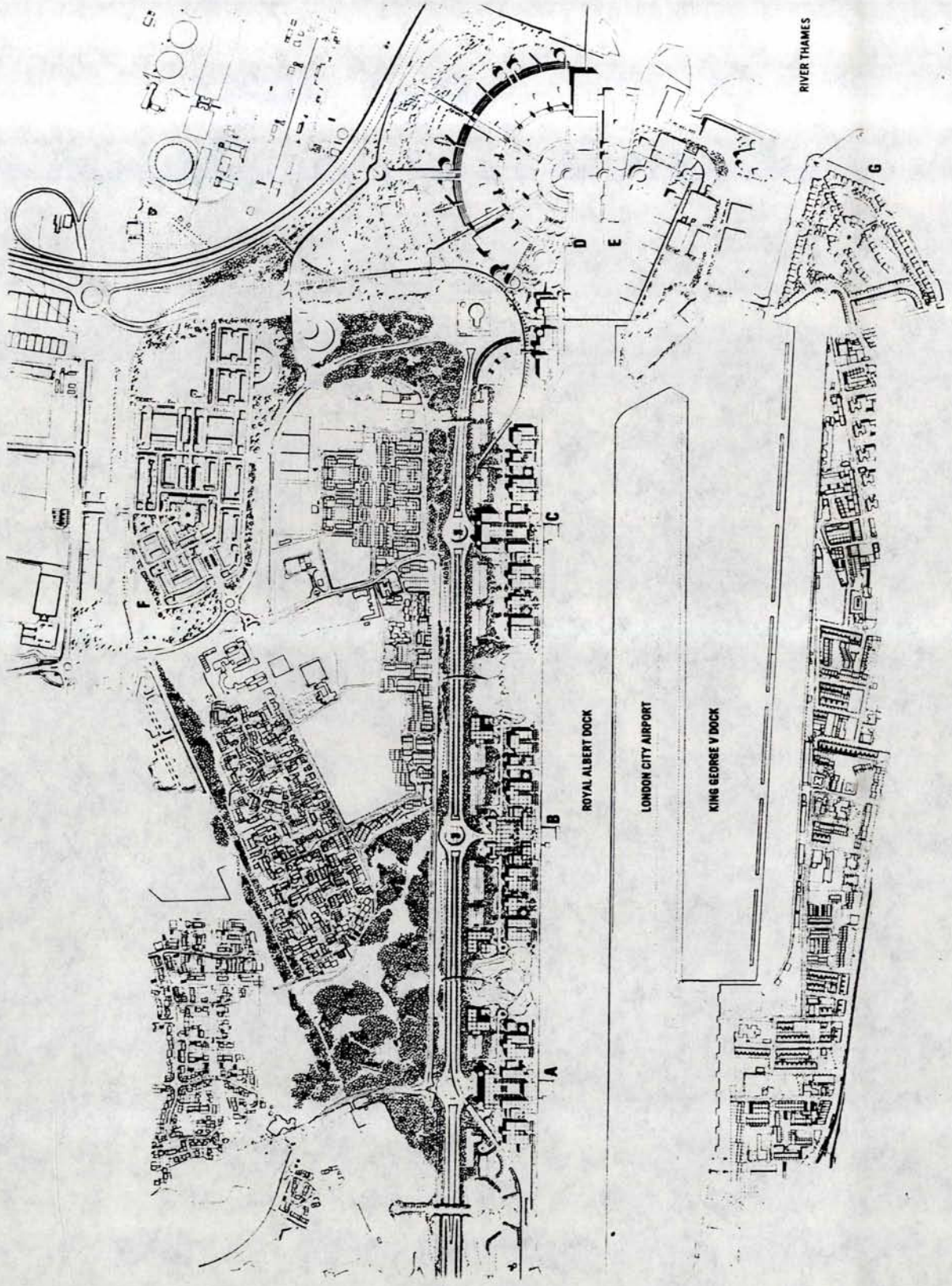
NOTION OF GATE/ENTRY TO THE CITY  
THE CREATION OF A RIVER FACADE.





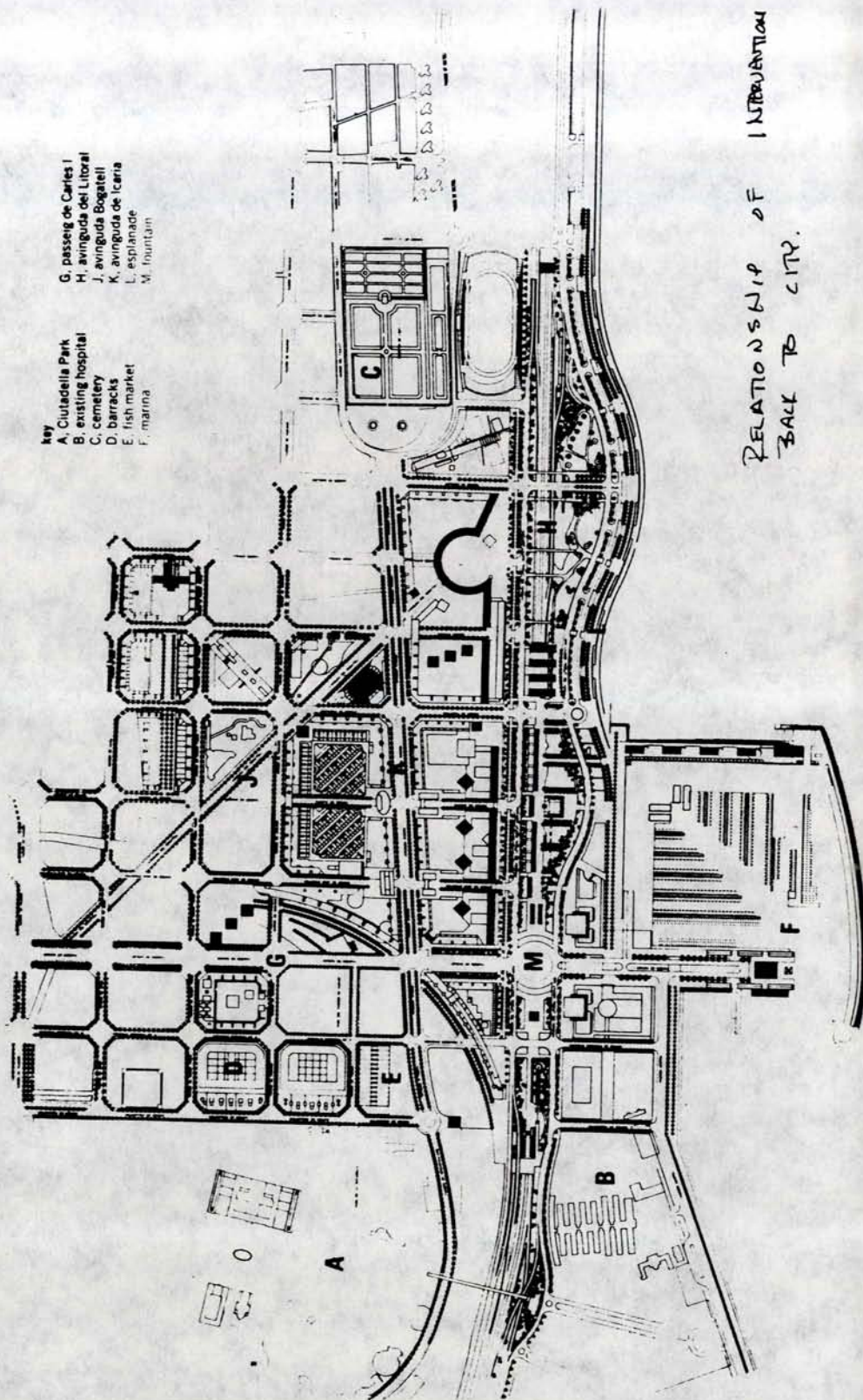
LONDON DOCKLANDS-STEPHEN PROCTOR



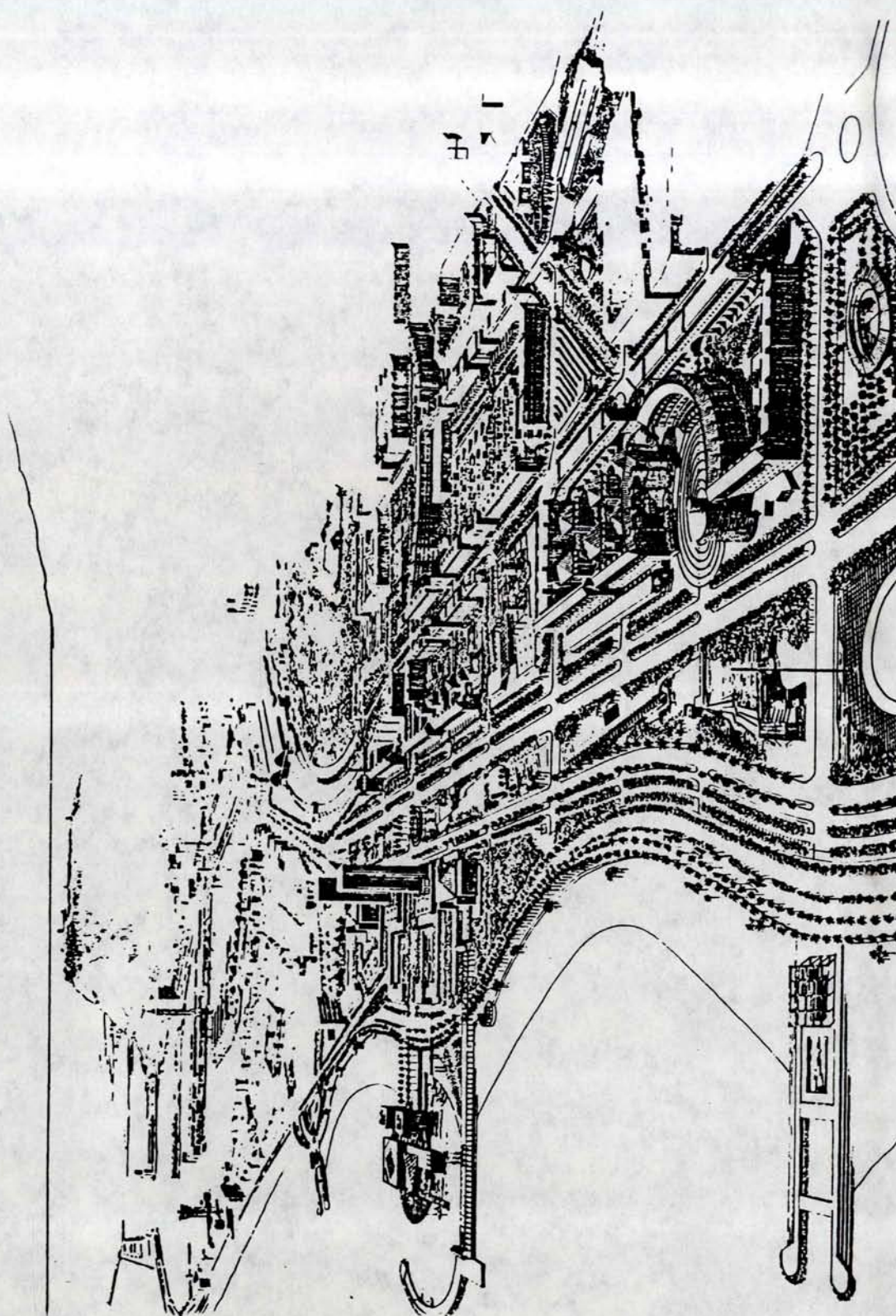


ROYAL ALBERT DOCK MASTER PLAN-RICHARD ROGERS





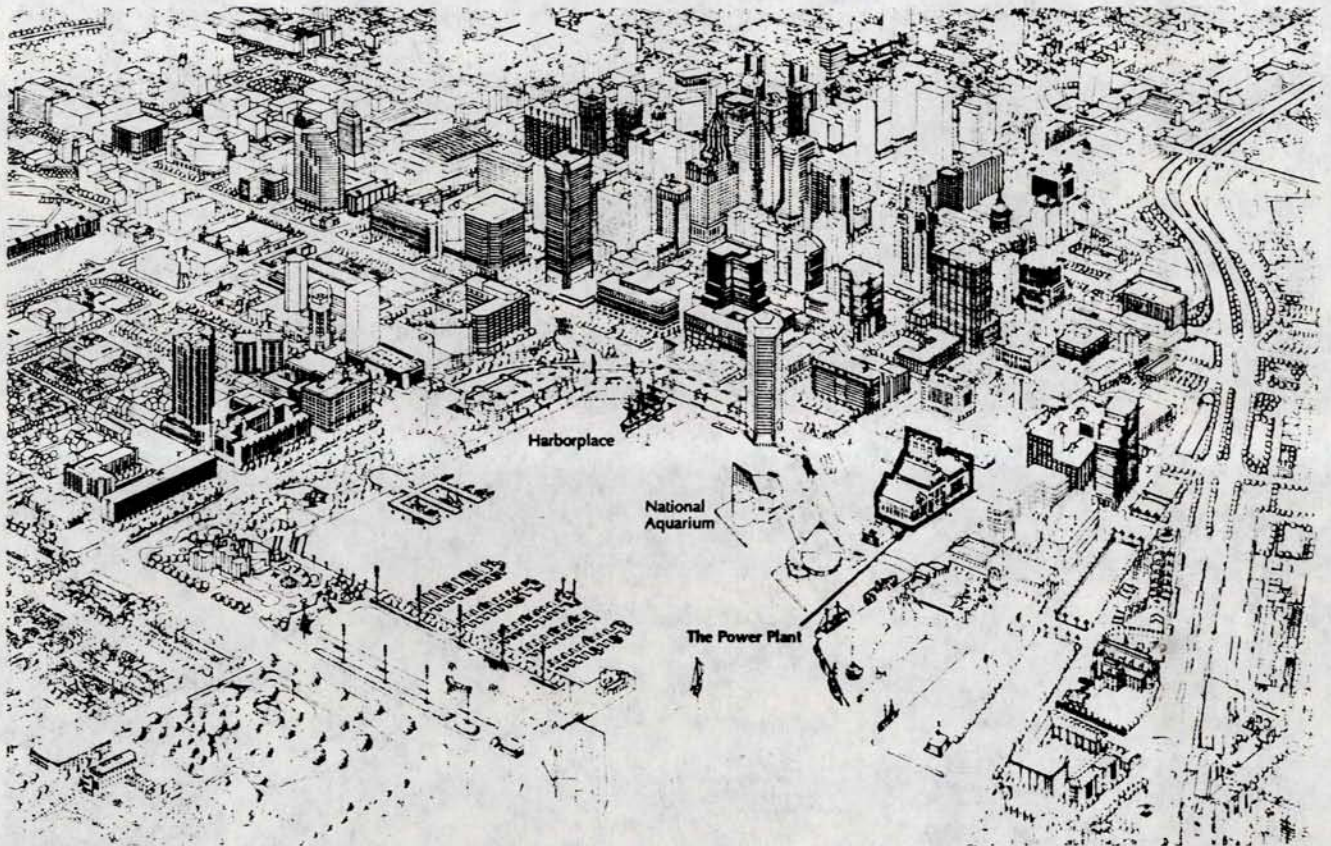




OLYMPIC VILLAGE-BARCELONA-MATORELL, BOHILAS, MACKAY, &  
PUIGDOMENECH



# BALTIMORE







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